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FIRST THINGS

May 1994
Number 43

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

Evangelicals & Catholics Together
A Declaration

The Hipster and the Organization Man
Wilfred M. McClay

Lutherans in Sexual Commotion
Leonard Klein

The Corrected Jesus
Richard B. Hays

Abortion Facts and Feelings II: An Exchange
James Q. Wilson / Hadley Arkes

Recalling America
Mother Teresa

Bipartisan Death Rows
Peter L. Berger

Opinions and Reviews: Sex, Religion, Virtue, and Reward
Peter J. Leithart • Charles Pinches • Joseph R. Reisert
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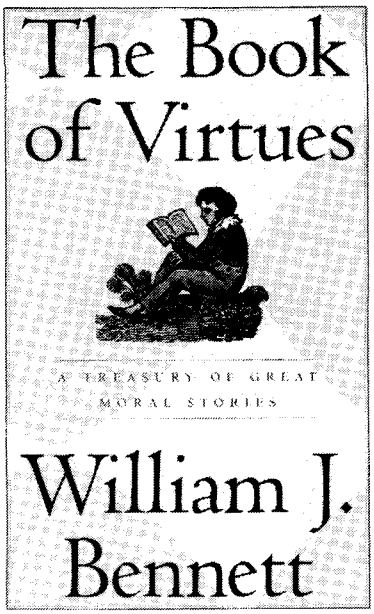

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

MAY 1994 • NUMBER 43

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The Making of a President?

It was with eager anticipation that I read the Opinion "A President in Process" by editor James Nuechterlein (February). But after failing to express any opinion at all and being unable to find any nice and neat category in which to drop President Clinton, the editor concludes that Bill Clinton is "a President still in the making."

Well, thank God for that! This adaptability and self-growth is the one constant trait in all great men. If only Mr. Nuechterlein was an editor "still in the making." But no, he's out there gallivanting with all the media pundits and politicians using their fixed myopic views of the world to search for little slots to stick people into.

All the opinions we get from Mr. Nuechterlein are sneaky innuendo like, "It is difficult to tell with Clinton. The sincerity is apparent, but sometimes one suspects a kind of serial sincerity." Or he writes, "[Clinton's] governing ideology is all over the place. . . ." This is "opinion" in the worst form. If you have an idea then write it, if you don't then get a life!

Henry J. Schultz
Santa Clarita, CA

Reading James Nuechterlein's "A President in Process," it occurs to me that the personal behavior of a collectivist liberal is relevant to the conduct of his office.

The collectivist liberal campaigns on the proposition that the voters are too imprudent or incompetent to provide for old age, periods of unemployment, sickness, or unwanted requests for sexual liaison. However, these same voters are smart enough to vote for him to provide for these matters.

It follows that he should show some proficiency in handling the basic commitments of his own life. As Ross Perot might ask, if your wife can't trust you why should we? Or if you can't succeed in a real estate deal with the power of political influence on your side, how do you propose to manage industrial policy for the world's largest and most diverse economy?

The conservative politician, on the other hand, propounds that all politicians are flawed and that all power corrupts.

The latter is the more believable—the more so if his personal behavior illustrates the point.

Robert C. Lea, Jr.
Queen Anne, MD

Profanation?

I commend you for your fine symposium on *Veritatis Splendor*. I wish, however, that you had heeded the encyclical when you chose to publish Robert M. Price's reprehensible satire "The Bible, Corrected" in the same issue (January).

A key theme in *Veritatis Splendor* is that some acts are intrinsically wrong, regardless of motive or justification. One such class of actions is blasphemy: speaking irreverently of God. To publish a satire depicting Jesus Christ as saying ludicrous words or as performing impious actions (particularly at the Last Supper!) is grievously wrong, regardless of motive.

I share your writer's exasperation with tendentious revisions of Scripture, radical feminism, and shameless manipulations of the Gospel to serve political agendas. But no such considerations can justify a piece like "The Bible, Corrected." The person of Christ is absolutely out of bounds as a subject for satire.

A primary purpose of First Things, as I understand it, is to combat the desacralization of our culture. It is grim to reflect that our sense of the sacred is so far attenuated that First Things itself could slip into this profanation. Watch yourselves! Your magazine's mission is too important to be compromised by scandals of this nature.

John D. Hagen, Jr.
Minneapolis, MN

Robert M. Price replies:

Like Mr. Hagen, I am acutely uncomfortable with humor at the expense of

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Jesus Christ. I see myself, however, as having depicted and lampooned "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4), the one made over in the image of those whose PC propaganda he is made to spout. It is unfair to say I have made the person of Christ a subject for satire. Just the reverse. I seek to counteract those who have already made a mockery of him. I fear Mr. Hagen comes eerily close to demanding just the sort of "sensitivity" censorship advocated by the PC crowd he and I both oppose. It is an irony I am sure he does not intend.

Exploring *Veritatis Splendor*

In one respect (only), I found the symposium on *Veritatis Splendor* (January) somewhat unsatisfying. Where precisely does the line now fall between proportionalism and legitimate Christian action? Hadley Arkes addresses this issue, but in a way which I wonder whether Richard John Neuhaus or Robert P. George would accept. I had always thought that if the wartime Gestapo ordered me to kill ten Jews or face death myself, the proper (and under these specific circumstances, Christian) response was to kill the person who gave me the order (with a distant second place to simply awaiting death). I understand that it is wrong to kill the innocent even if I believe that doing so would hasten the end of the war. But how is my proposed response—which at least arguably falls within Arkes' "will that forms the act, or the maxim that guides the understanding of the actor"—different from Professor George's definition of proportionalism? Surely if Professor Arkes is right about the "shading and calibration" of Catholic teaching, then stating that my actions are motivated in part by the immediate circumstances should not automatically place me within a proportionalist framework.

If I am wrong, then I hope my error is honest and covered by grace. But I also hope that one result of *Veritatis Splendor* will be a more precise definition of proportionalism, not for the sake of the academy only but more urgently for those Christians who live lives in circumstances giving rise to hard questions of moral action.

John S. Gardner
Cambridge, MA

Hadley Arkes replies:

I think Mr. Gardner can be confirmed in his judgment: the action he describes would not place him "within a proportionalist framework." Among the people who have studied *Veritatis Splendor*, there does not seem to be even a flicker of doubt on that question of the Dutch householders speaking falsely to the Gestapo at the door, looking for Jews. No one thinks for a moment that this act would be condemned by the Pope as an instance of "lying." The Dutch householders would not be pleading here for an "exception" from an "exceptionless norm" about lying. Nor would they be seeking to justify a "lie" by calculating the different consequences of their act and predicting that there will be a benign balance of the good results over the bad. What they would understand rather is that their act does not contain the properties that mark the character of a lie—which is to say, an act of speaking falsely for the sake of deceiving another, and inflicting a harm without justification. The children who mislead their father about the surprise party they have planned have not committed the moral wrong of lying. If the Dutch householders had spoken the truth to the Nazis at the door, they would have made themselves accomplices in the evil of killing the innocent. No one thinks the Pope would have enjoined them to speak the truth to the wicked, or that he would have condemned them in turn for the wickedness of lying.

Robert P. George replies:

In *Veritatis Splendor*, the Pope defends the traditional teaching that some acts, such as the direct killing of innocent human beings, are *intrinsically* evil and may therefore *never* licitly be performed. Having (or performing) an abortion, for example, or terror bombing a civilian population, cannot be justified by the good consequences to be achieved, or bad consequences to be avoided, by carrying out these choices. They are wrong under any circumstances.

Proportionalists deny this teaching. Although they typically hold that abortion and terror bombing are "usually," or even "virtually always," wrong, they maintain that these actions could be right in circumstances in which performing them would conduce to the net best proportion of good to bad in the world overall and in the long run.

In affirming the traditional teaching, and rejecting the proportionalist methodology of moral judgment, Professor Arkes and I stand with the Pope. Although I'm not quite sure what Mr. Gardner means by actions being "motivated in part by the immediate circumstances," I can assure him that so long as he holds that there are acts, such as direct abortion and terror bombing, that are wrong in any circumstances, he stands with us against proportionalism.

Proportionalism Defended

I was somewhat befuddled by "But What About the Other Side?" (Public Square, February). Responding to a subscriber who asks why your symposium on *Veritatis Splendor* did not include anything written by dissenting theologians, Father Neuhaus writes, "We didn't include 'the other side' because, quite frankly, it has nothing to say at this point that is very interesting. . . . Disagreement with the teaching, if disagreement there must be, should follow the sympathetic engagement of the teaching. We're so old-fashioned that we hold to what now sounds like the novel idea that people should, before dissenting, know what they are dissenting from." This, no doubt, is a fair point. It would, however, be more convincing if any of your commentators had sought to demonstrate what it is in the encyclical that refutes those arguments raised by the "dissenters."

For example, the encyclical rejects proportionalism, and this rejection is supposedly grounded in a proper understanding of the object of the act. It's simply not clear, however, that this argument addresses the ques-

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tions raised by proportionalists. Proportionalism criticizes the moral relevance of the distinction between directly and indirectly intending evil that undergirds the double effect. The critique, as I understand it, is as follows.

One can distinguish three different ways in which intention can be understood. (1) Something is intended when it is the foreseeable consequence of my action. (2) Something is intended when it is desired for its own sake. Intention here refers to the purpose of my action, that good for the sake of which I perform the action. (3) Something can be intended as a means. Here the thing is intended for the sake of something else; it is not desired for its own sake.

Now, in certain circumstances the double effect allows that evil be intended in the sense of (1), but never in the sense of (2) and (3). If an evil is the foreseeable consequence of my action, but indirectly intended, it is morally licit to cause the evil. The question is why? After all, if evil is the foreseeable consequence of my action it is intended in the broad sense of (1). Yet the double effect claims that this kind of intention is not morally relevant. Why? What makes indirectly intending morally different from directly intending?

The only moral difference I can think of is the following. An evil directly intended is desired for its own sake; it is the purpose or reason for performing the action. An evil indirectly intended is not desired for its own sake, although it is a causal result of my action. In other words, the difference between directly and indirectly intending an evil appears to be purely psychological; when evil is directly intended it is desired, when evil is indirectly intended it is not desired.

But then the question emerges, If the moral difference between directly and indirectly intending is simply the relation of desire to the evil, what is the moral significance of intending something as a means? Couldn't one argue that in conflict situations the evil intended as a means is not desired for its own sake? And if the evil intended as a means is not desired for its own sake, then what is the moral difference between (3) and (1), between intending evil as a means and intending evil as the foreseeable consequence of my action? In both cases the evil results causally from my action, and in both cases the evil is not desired for its own sake.

It is the force of this reasoning that leads proportionalists to reject the double effect, and thus to argue that it can be morally licit to directly intend certain nonmoral evils. And it is this conclusion that leads proportionalists to dissent in good conscience from certain official Catholic teachings, such as, for example, the absolute moral prohibition against contraceptive intercourse.

So, then, my question (which I hope you don't find uninteresting) is, What does *Veritatis Splendor* say in response to the argument above? How does it debunk proportionalism's debunking of double effect? In asking this question I do not mean to be smug or glib. I simply want to know. I have read the encyclical countless times and have not yet found an answer. But since Fr. Neuhaus has sympathetically engaged the document perhaps he can enlighten me. At any rate, until either he or the other commentators have explained how it is that *Veritatis Splendor* refutes contemporary critiques of the double effect, the charge that the dissenters have nothing interesting to say can only sound hollow and, well, dull-witted.

H. David Baer
Graduate Student
Department of Theology
University of Notre Dame

Richard John Neuhaus replies:

We cannot convene the symposiasts to respond to Mr. Baer's questions, but we suspect that some of them would note that it is confusing to call knowledge of foreseeable consequences "intention," and they might ask for clarification of, inter alia, what defines "nonmoral evils." But Mr. Baer is undoubtedly right in observing that the symposium did not address all the questions that might be raised regarding *Veritatis Splendor*, which is why the conversation will be continued.

Liberalism and the Church

Apropos Father Maciej Zieba's "The Liberalism that We Need" (February): Liberalism and the Industrial Revolution gave the common people the franchise, which enabled them to gain the freedom that we possess in praxis today—political, economic, and ideological. The Church and religion had little to do with it. The Church supported the status quo, which is understandable, but the status quo in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and before that) gave us a class society, top to bottom . . . with the upper stratum as masters. What the common man had mostly was poverty, servitude, insecurity, and want, which resulted in periodic insurrection and peasant revolt. The upper clergy were part of the privileged, and although the Church often provided for the poor, the poor were poor in lack of freedom and equality.

Although there was more personal freedom in the Low Countries than in the rest of Europe, the establishment of the United States of America was new for the rights of man, sui generis, an exemplar of freedom. The American regime and the French Revolution which followed (and which went awry) were harbingers of freedom in overthrowing the privileged classes and were an inspiration to free the common man from exploitation by the few.

What the Pope is saying in *Veritatis Splendor* about freedom and truth and liberalism is that without truth, freedom does not exist, and liberalism degenerates into individualism and relativism in which everything becomes relative. In that situation political freedom and human rights are subject, not to principle, but to numbers, to the majority, who may or may not allow human rights to exist.

Liberalism in extremis is the current American dogma par excellence, epitomized in the gimme-gimme, get-get, do-do your own thing syndrome advocated and propagated every minute in advertising in the media. . . .

John Branigan
Staten Island, NY

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Science and Free Will

Jeffrey Burke Satinover argues in "Psychology and the Abolition of Meaning" (February) that within the Western scientific framework, there is "never any room whatever for freely acting agents. . . . It is in the very nature of science and the scientific method that it cannot at all address or understand free agency." Against this, Satinover argues for an irreducible freedom of agency, and hence the possibility of human meaning.

It is indeed the case that the predominant view within the neurosciences (with psychology following) is that the mind will ultimately be understood in terms of the mechanical working of neurons, synapses, and neurotransmitters, with consciousness somehow an "emergent" property of this mechanical system, and free will merely an illusion. Satinover apparently accepts this view from neuroscience as an account of the most comprehensive scientific worldview. He offers no basis on scientific grounds to dissent from this view of human nature. His plea for a core of human freedom, meaning, and moral agency must seem, from a purely scientific standpoint, like little more than wishful thinking. As a scientist who is very sympathetic to the concerns raised by Satinover and to the view of human nature he would like to maintain, I would argue that crucial aspects of current physical theory suggest a much less pessimistic response to scientific thinking.

In positing a mechanical view of the mind and of human agency, psychology and neuroscience are following in the path of the understanding of nature brought forth in the seventeenth century by Newtonian mechanics and vastly expanded since then. This scientific program was phenomenally successful in what it set out to do. It is understandable that science would try to carry this over to the study of living systems and of human beings, indeed already with a certain degree of success. The full devastation of this on man's view of himself is becoming apparent, as Satinover is clearly aware.

However, I do not believe that the view represented by the neurosciences has absorbed the implications of the revolutionary developments of the twentieth century in physics, in particular the physical theory of quantum mechanics, developed originally to account for atomic phenomena, where the Newtonian theory breaks down. Quantum mechanics has by now been tested with astonishing precision. It encompasses earlier, classical theories (which are generally very accurate for the domains to which they apply). However, it has radically different ontological foundations than the earlier theories.

In particular, quantum mechanics posits a role for the observer in physical reality that has fundamental implications for the Newtonian view of physical reality as existing and developing independently of any freely acting agent. To oversimplify a bit, and ignoring some possibly relevant contemporary developments, in quantum mechanics it is necessary to posit the intervention of an "observer" at a certain crucial point of the measurement process. At such a point, the ordinary causal development is suspended (within confines strictly defined by the Heisenberg uncertainty principle). Furthermore, it is pretty well established that objective properties of physical systems do not always even *exist* independent of an observer—in a sense, they come into being through the action of the observer.

I therefore believe that the theory of quantum mechanics, by virtue of its fundamental principles, is compatible with a role for mind as agent in determining some actions of purely material portions of biological systems. (Of course, this activity is entirely subject to the constraints imposed by the quantum mechanical laws governing the physical workings of those material systems.) Furthermore, the fundamental postulates of the theory are suggestive not only of this compatibility, but even of mechanisms by which this agency could be exercised.

If this view is correct, there is no necessary contradiction between the agency of mind exercising will and the strict obedience of known physical law by the material brain. Rather, the possibility as well as the hypothesized means for this agency of mind emerge from the most basic postulates of the physical theory. It is possible to begin to think of a reconciliation between the worldview of science and the older ideas of human freedom and dignity.

Michael E. Kellman
Professor of Chemistry
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR

I thoroughly enjoyed "Psychology and the Abolition of Meaning" by Jeffrey Burke Satinover, his presentation and his conclusions. I would like to buttress one of his conclusions, i.e., "that the only domain of potential choice that means anything to us and which, if it exists at all, needs be a priori free is that of moral choice."

The scientific onslaught that reduces the area where free will can remain free of analytic reduction is a phony one. True science recognizes its limits. Pseudo-science, based on transformation of the scientific method into a new religion, knows no limits. The scientific method is not content with postulating a model and looking for correlations among the factors. Correlation does not imply causality. Correlation may be due to a common, but separate, cause. Causality must be proved for each parameter, not by a reduction of the residuals and variance only, but by making a prediction and verifying that a true manipulation of the factor(s) produces the expected results. If a mechanistic manipulation of the factor is impossible, the factor is not a controlling one and no causality can be inferred. The multiplication of factors to reduce variability or lack of fit is also unscientific: overparametrization is not a scientific proof. The simplest model with the fewest parameters is the most acceptable one. . . .

Dr. Satinover accurately remarks that "we know of no factors whatever that account for the variability of action from one person, or group of people, to another." For a real scientist that is the signal that conclusions

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cannot be drawn about causality concerning human behavior. One could keep looking for such a factor, but until one is found, the conclusions of pseudo-science about free will can be safely classified as the product of fertile but unscientific minds.

Bruno J. Jambor
Littleton, CO

An Illegitimate Regime?

The Public Square ("Bloody-Minded Compassion," February) considers the demise of abortionist David Gunn a year ago and, in the course of examining the pros and cons, touches on the question of whether we live under a "morally illegitimate regime." The conclusion is that the regime is legitimate.

I find this view to be quite astonishing in view of the blood guilt the present American government carries for the deaths of between 30 and 40 million of its most innocent citizens, the unborn children. This immense slaughter is the direct responsibility of a government that has not only permitted it but, in many cases, has paid for and even performed the killings in its own hospitals by its own abortionist employees.

The answer would be, I suppose, that this American government attained power through approved legal, democratic processes and is therefore legitimate.

If this is the litmus test of a government's moral legitimacy, need I remind you that the Third Reich, which carried out the First Holocaust, would pass with flying colors? It too was elected in a free and fair election. The Reichs Chancellor—one Adolf Hitler—assumed supreme power legally, in complete accordance with the processes of the German constitution. Everything he did thereafter, even the Holocaust, was legal. But . . . would anyone argue that this regime was legitimate, and that Germans were required, morally, to give it their allegiance and obedience?

In the next few years, as our society descends deeper into the abyss, we shall find this question of legitimacy to be increasingly urgent. I would suggest that First Things address this issue, with full and fair discussion, in the near future.

Time is growing short!

Joseph P. Wall
Philadelphia, PA

Selective Criticism?

How, er, *interesting* that The Public Square (February) should feature a criticism of the WCC for calling for relaxation of sanctions against Serbia without mentioning the current Western trade relations with Croatia. How did the Communist-era borders of Serbia come to be sacrosanct? Should it have been left to Germany to draw Poland's borders at the end of World War II?

When the half-Slovene, half-Croat, Communist Tito "ethnically cleansed" Kosovo of Serbs, where was the West? When Croatia takes steps to celebrate fascist Croatia's World War II-era genocide of Serbs (500,000 murdered), where is the West?

It isn't only in Russia that Orthodox Christians see an element of the traditional Roman Catholic hostility to Serbia and Orthodoxy in the current Western rhetoric about events in the Balkans. Given a choice between Croat rule on the one hand and an avowed intention to form a "Muslim state" on the other, Greeks, Serbs, and other Orthodox know this has historically been a choice between the frying pan and the fire. First Things might try climbing down off the bandwagon and analyzing the Yugoslav problem from the Eastern perspective once in a while. . . .

Kevin R. Gutzman
Charlottesville, VA

Who's the Liar?

Matthew Berke's "The Big Lie Continued" (February) is so completely uncritical about review subjects Deborah Lipstadt and Pierre Vidal-Naquet that his efforts should more properly be classified as panegyrics rather than review.

Had Berke stopped for a moment to reflect, he might have asked if his subjects accurately characterize what Holocaust revisionists say (they don't). He might have investigated their so-called response to the revisionist challenge to see if it measures up (it doesn't). He might have paused to wonder why Lipstadt and Vidal-Naquet spend so much time metacommunicating and waging personal attacks, and so little time presenting evidence to support their positions (they have no other option). He might even have delved into the dichotomy between Lipstadt's and Vidal-Naquet's pathetic pleas to be allowed to pontificate about the Holocaust (and Holocaust revisionism) without fear of being gainsaid (their positions are bankrupt).

Instead, Berke regurgitated the worst that Lipstadt and Vidal-Naquet have to offer, and then added his own mischaracterizations and inaccuracies.

It is not possible to correct the countless errors in Berke's review of these two books in a letter, but one thing must be said: Holocaust revisionism would not have grown as it has over the last decade if not for the fact that our position can withstand the scrutiny of any fair-minded person.

Greg Raven
Associate Editor
Institute for Historical Review
Newport Beach, CA

Although Matthew Berke's review of Deborah Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* is a more or less accurate depiction of the way that work treats Holocaust denial and revisionism, it appears to have been constructed without a very close reading of her book. In referring to Dr. Lipstatdt as well as Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Mr. Berke states, "Neither author regards the story of the Holocaust as sacred history or martyrology that is exempt from revisions. . . ." In Dr. Lipstadt's case, there is abundant evidence that she perceives the Holocaust to be a closed question and is so willing to prevent any deviation from her approved line that she saves a portion of her rancor for deconstructionists and those who would support a more relativist position with respect to history and social reality.

Although one example does not constitute a proof, the following quo-

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tation from Dr. Lipstadt's book amply conveys the tone in which she engages in what I have called "anti-denial." On page 18 of her book can be found the following assertion: "In academic circles some scholars spoke of relative truths, rejecting the notion that there was one version of the world that was necessarily right while another was wrong." Throughout the Lipstadt work runs the theme that the description and interpretation of the events collectively called the Holocaust are easily known and eternally fixed. However much "deniers" of the Holocaust may be scoundrels and engage in vile distortions of one of history's most egregious examples of inhumanity, it in no way serves the cause of accurate remembrance to attempt to monopolize intellectual discourse with heavy-handed rationalism and realism. History, like all social reality, is composed of a multiplicity of versions formulated by a host of individuals all with their separate and sometimes conflicting agendas. When we come together in good faith (as the deniers apparently are not willing to do), evidence assists us in judging between competing versions.

What we are witnessing, I would suggest, is that the Holocaust is taking on some of the characteristics of a cult, with adherents promoting a dogmatic approach to a series of sacred events. The unfortunate examples of this development are becoming quite numerous. Witness the ceremony at the dedication of the Holocaust Museum in Washington when soil was mixed from the sites of thirty-nine Nazi concentration camps and placed within the base of the eternal flame burning in that building. What has this to do with the accurate portrayal of the Holocaust and the moral lessons that need to be taken from its retelling? An "anti-denial" that is blind to the various aspects of its own subjectivity will have an even more difficult time drowning out the siren call of deniers.

Marvin Prosono
Department of Sociology
and Anthropology
Southwest Missouri
State University
Springfield, MO

Matthew Berke replies:

The Nazis murdered six million Jews and millions of others as well, not in war but as a matter of deliberate policy—this is a public fact beyond reasonable doubt, especially since much of the mass murder was done in plain view for the world to see and is attested to, among other places, in voluminous German records. One can deny it only by an act of sheer will. Mr. Raven argues that Holocaust denial could not survive and grow if it were unable to "withstand the scrutiny of . . . fair-minded" people. Yet, against all reason and evidence, there are those who insist that the world is flat or that they have seen Elvis Presley or been captured by space aliens. The phenomenon of Holocaust denial testifies not to its actual plausibility but to the persistence, in our still unredeemed world, of irrationality, hysteria, and, in this case, an unspeakably malignant intention.

As for Professor Prosono, his accusation against Deborah Lipstadt is completely wrong. Her attack on relativist and deconstructionist readings of history does not, as I indicated, preclude new or dramatically different interpretations of the Holocaust (or any other event) in the light of new evidence and argumentation. What she opposes and denounces is the idea that there are no public facts or arguments that have universal validity. Lipstadt's polemic against relativism and deconstruction is on an entirely different level—not about the specific truth of this or that situation but about whether there are ascertainable facts or truths at all. If there are no such truths and standards, how can Prof. Prosono possibly say that the deniers "may be scoundrels and engage in vile distortions"?

There is, as he implies, a certain amount of morbid fascination with and manipulating of the event of the Holocaust, a fact alluded to briefly in my review. However, I'm not sure what his point is in this regard. Whatever Prof. Prosono's intentions, his coinage of the phrase "anti-denial" is pernicious, for it establishes a parity, or something resembling parity, between the deniers (who may, he allows, be "scoundrels") and historians who denounce them.

For Buddhist Libertarianism

In your promotional mailing you wrote that you were "interreligious" and that you "transcend(ed) the stale and sterile categories of 'liberal'

Editorial Position Available

FIRST THINGS will have an editorial position open beginning Fall 1994.

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and 'conservative,' [and] 'left and right.' " As a Buddhist and libertarian, these two claims particularly aroused my interest and influenced my decision to subscribe. But having received my fourth issue, your perspective seems to be predominantly Roman Catholic and very much inclined toward conservatism. The very few times you even mention other religions, it is with snide dismissal. Certainly it's refreshing to read analyses of non-Judeo-Christian religious viewpoints that aren't as blindly uncritical as most on the left, but your articles contain little more than occasional oblique insults. . . .

I don't know if you're trying to avoid the term, but I know there must be a fair number of "libertarian" Christians in this country and abroad. I suspect one could also find at least a few religious Jews with classical liberal political leanings. And although the chances of finding any are probably minute, perhaps with some searching one or two libertarian Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, or adherents of "the so-called new religions," of academic caliber and with good writing skills, could be found. If you were to more actively solicit their opinions, I think you would find a dialogue with them more challenging than your usual foils. Perhaps your readers might enjoy a more broadened perspective also.

James N. Dawson
Redwood Valley, CA

The editors reply:

While not neglecting things Catholic, the editors are thoroughly catholic and welcome submissions from, inter alia, Buddhist libertarians.

Correction:

The cover and contents page of our April issue mistakenly referred to a Christine Whitbeck as one contributor to "The Sanctity of Life Seduced: A Symposium on Medical Ethics." Her name is in fact Caroline Whitbeck. Though the name is correctly stated in the article itself, we apologize for the error on the cover and table of contents.

Recognition

(Psalm 139)

Look in:
My soul is glass
To you, no vein
Or bone unseen
But you know
All I pass through,
All I do, ahead
Or inside me,
Before I do.
I can't tell
What you don't
Prompt my tongue
To say: no matter what
The thought: no cloak
So thick: no parcel
Of the sky (if I
Made wings this morning)
No ditch, no deep
(Were I to dive
Or dig) so dark
That your hand could not
Find me, touch me,
Seize me, raise me
Gasping, flashing
Scales to the light.
My soul's a tiny
You, my bones your
Bread baked in ovens
Buried under foot,
My days unreeled
Film you took in
At a glance before
I lived them. If my songs
Outnumbered sea grass
Grown on sand dunes
Inching inland from the margin,
They would count less
Than a comma, than a swash
Stroked in your book. Both
Of and with you, have I ever
Cottoned to bad ones
Lugging bags of goods,
Who worship their bodies,
Who lie and act tasteful?
I think not. I hate them
And refuse their cash,
Their compliments, their statuettes
And solemn uniforms.
Peer through the glass,
Lord, know me, show
Me a right way to walk
My watch on your part
In the daylight, into night.

Laurance Wieder

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Opinion

Recalling America

Mother Teresa

The following amicus brief was filed recently before the U.S. Supreme Court in the cases of Loce v. New Jersey *and* Krail et al. v. New Jersey.

I hope you will count it no presumption that I seek your leave to address you on behalf of the unborn child. Like that child I can be called an outsider. I am not an American citizen. My parents were Albanian. I was born before the First World War in a part of what was not yet, and is no longer, Yugoslavia. In many senses I know what it is like to be without a country. I also know what it is like to feel an adopted citizen of other lands. When I was still a young girl I travelled to India. I found my work among the poor and the sick of that nation, and I have lived there ever since.

Since 1950 I have worked with my many sisters from around the world as one of the Missionaries of Charity. Our congregation now has over four hundred foundations in more than one hundred countries, including the United States of America. We have almost five thousand sisters. We care for those who are often treated as outsiders in their own communities by their own neighbors—the starving, the crippled, the impoverished, and the diseased, from the old woman with a brain tumor in Calcutta to the young man with AIDS in New York City. A special focus of our care are mothers and their children. This includes mothers who feel pressured to sacrifice their unborn children by want, neglect, despair, and philosophies and governmental policies that promote the dehumanization of inconvenient human life. And it includes the children themselves, innocent and utterly defenseless, who are at the mercy of those who would deny their humanity. So, in a sense, my sisters and those we serve are all outsiders together. At the same time, we are supremely conscious of the common bonds of humanity that unite us and transcend national boundaries.

In another sense, no one in the world who prizes liberty and human rights can feel anything but a strong kinship with America. Yours is the one great nation in all of history that was founded on the precept of equal rights and respect for all humankind, for the poorest and weakest of us as well as the richest and strongest. As your Declaration of Independence put it, in words that have never lost their power to stir the heart: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. . . ." A nation founded on these principles holds a sacred trust: to stand as an example to the rest of the world, to climb ever higher in its practical realization of the ideals of human dignity, brotherhood, and mutual respect. . . . Your constant efforts in fulfillment of that mission, far more than your size or your wealth or your military might, . . . have made America an inspiration to all mankind.

It must be recognized that your model was never one of realized perfection, but of ceaseless aspiration. From the outset, for example, America denied the African slave his freedom and human dignity. But in time you righted that wrong, albeit at an incalculable cost in human suffering and loss of life. Your impetus has almost always been toward a fuller, more all-embracing conception and assurance of the rights that your founding fathers recognized as inherent and God-given. Yours has ever been an inclusive, not an exclusive, society. And your steps, though they may have paused or faltered now and then, have been pointed in the right direction and have trod the right path. The task has not always been an easy one, and each new generation has faced its own challenges and temptations. But in a uniquely courageous and inspiring way, America has kept faith.

Yet there has been one infinitely tragic and destructive departure from those American ideals in recent memory. It was this Court's own decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) to exclude the unborn child from the human family. You ruled that a mother, in consultation with her doctor, has broad discretion, guaranteed against infringement by the United States Constitution, to choose to destroy her unborn child. Your opinion stated that you did not need to "resolve the difficult question of when life begins." That question is inescapable. If the right to life is an inherent and inalienable right, it must surely obtain wherever human life exists. No one can deny that the unborn child is a distinct being, that it is human, and that it is alive. It is unjust, therefore, to deprive the unborn child of its fundamental right to life on the basis of its age, size, or condition of dependency. It was a sad infidelity to America's highest ideals when this Court said that it did not matter, or could not be determined, when the inalienable right to life began for a child in its mother's womb.

America needs no words from me to see how your decision in *Roe v. Wade* has deformed a great nation. The so-called right to abortion has pitted mothers against their children and women against men. It has sown violence and discord at the heart of the most

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intimate human relationships. It has aggravated the derogation of the father's role in an increasingly fatherless society. It has portrayed the greatest of gifts—a child—as a competitor, an intrusion, and an inconvenience. It has nominally accorded mothers unfettered dominion over the independent lives of their physically dependent sons and daughters. And, in granting this unconscionable power, it has exposed many women to unjust and selfish demands from their husbands or other sexual partners.

Human rights are not a privilege conferred by government. They are every human being's entitlement by virtue of his humanity. The right to life does not depend, and must not be declared to be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or a sovereign. The Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany recently ruled that "the unborn child is entitled to its right to life independently of acceptance by its mother; this is an elementary and inalienable right that emanates from the dignity of the human being." Americans may feel justly proud that Germany in 1993 was able to recognize the sanctity of human life. You must weep that your own government, at present, seems blind to this truth.

I have no new teaching for America. I seek only to recall you to faithfulness to what you once taught the world. Your nation was founded on the proposition—very old as a moral precept, but startling and innovative as a political insight—that human life is a gift of immeasurable worth, and that it deserves, always and everywhere, to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. I urge the Court to take the opportunity presented by the petitions in these cases to consider the fundamental question of when human life begins and to declare without equivocation the inalienable rights which it possesses.

MOTHER TERESA *is the founder and Mother Superior of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, based in Calcutta, India.*

The Very Modern Christian Right

Peter J. Leithart

When the Christian right attacked what was understood to be a recently achieved secular humanist hegemony in American politics and culture, the thrust struck deeper than they imagined. The real target, it turns out, was not a humanist conspiracy of the late twentieth century, but one of the fundamental principles of modern political life.

Modern politics was born, in a more than chronological sense, in the aftermath of the wars of religion. Wolfhart Pannenberg has pointed out that until the seventeenth century it was assumed that uniformity of belief was a prerequisite for orderly social life. After decades of bloodshed, violence, and terror in the wars of religion, however, many came to something like the opposite conviction that, in Pannenberg's words, "religious passion destroys social peace." Given a violently divided Christendom, the only sensible solution appeared to be to excise from political life the cause of these horrors—namely, particular theological claims—and to replace them with universally acceptable principles derived from human nature and natural law. Modern politics was thus founded on the principle that religion is a private concern, useful insofar as it inculcates socially approved virtues of toleration and honesty, dangerous if vigorously pressed into the political arena.

Under the circumstances, it is difficult to fault those who arrived at this solution; they were, after all, desperate for peace. Yet, understandable as it may be, the solution is impossible to implement. The notion that politics can function in a religious and theological vacuum is a myth. Politics is concerned with justice; justice is inescapably a moral concept; morality in turn is inescapably religious; and true religion, in the Christian perspective, inescapably includes particular theological commitments. Christianity entails the invariably political announcement that Jesus Christ, not Caesar, is Lord; to concede that political actors may legitimately ignore this highly specific theological claim is nothing less than an abandonment of the Christian position. If the Christian right accomplished nothing else, it should be recognized as an historically significant movement for its frontal assault on the modern myth of value-neutral politics.

It remains to be seen, however, whether this foundational modern principle can be challenged without a reversion to the mayhem of religious war. This dilemma has become particularly acute because, for all its animus toward modernity, the Christian right has made one of the most characteristic of modern political beliefs the foundation of its entire agenda. That assumption is, simply put, that the state has jurisdiction over morals. The fact that the name "Moral Majority" was given to what amounted to a political movement betrays this assumption, as does the "social issues agenda" of the Christian right.

This has not, however, been the traditional teaching of the Church. While the Church has insisted that the justice administered by the state should be rooted in Christian principle, historically the Church had not ceded the oversight of morality as such to the state. Of course, the line between administering justice and correcting morals is blurry, as many lines are. But the difficulty of making a distinction does

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not mean that no distinction can be made. Augustine, to take one example, disapproved of prostitution, but he did not believe that suppressing it was a proper use of civil authority.

As Ruben Alvarado has recently argued in the Reformed journal *Contra Mundum*, Christian theology has throughout the ages understood the *censura morum* to be within the jurisdiction of the Church. The Church, it was believed, could afford to be more flexibly responsive to the nuances and contours of individual situations than the state, and the Church was believed to possess more finely grained tools of correction than the blunt instruments of law and punishment. Alvarado cites the example of German Calvinist political theorist Johannes Althusius, who defined the discipline of morals as "the inquisition into and chastisement of those morals and luxuries that are not prevented or punished by laws, but which corrupt the souls of subjects or squander their goods unproductively." This inquisition is not the same as legal jurisdiction; rather, it acts "with respect to vices that do not come into the courts because of the lack of an accuser or denouncer, and yet offend the eyes of good and pious citizens. For the sake of example, these vices receive a most serious rebuke and notation, even though recourse is not had to legal punishment." Though assigned to the Church, this was a public, not a private, ministry, "crucial to public health."

In the wake of the collapse of the ecclesiastical administration of the *censura morum* in the modern world, there is nowhere else to turn for the correction of morals than the institutions of law and politics. American politics has thus ceased to be an arena of justice and has instead become the battleground on which moral-cultural issues are contested. Historically, the theory was, as articulated by Zacharias Ursinus, that "the Church . . . looks to the reformation and salvation of the offender; the magistrate to the execution of justice and the public peace." With the Church no longer fulfilling this public ministry, the penal system fills in the gap by shifting its focus from retribution and restitution to rehabilitation.

Both sides of the culture war operate on the premise that if immorality is to be corrected, it must be made illegal; the war is about whose definition of immorality will prevail. The Christian right's agenda, as much as that of the ACLU, assumes the rightness of what might be called the "ecclesiasticized state." A more radically Christian approach would be for the Church to challenge this assumption by reasserting her own jurisdiction over morals. In the pluralistic West, of course, the Church cannot claim to exercise this function over the whole of society. The Church could, however, at least begin by accepting responsibility for her own members.

Revival of the Church's oversight of morals will not occur without conflict; what I am suggesting is emphatically not an easy way out of our political impasse. Already, suits have been filed against churches attempting to exercise precisely this type of oversight with their own members. Logically, it is difficult to see why the gay rights agenda should stop at the door of the church; churches have already been sued for violating the civil rights of members censured for practicing homosexual sodomy. If abortion is the absolute constitutional right that some claim, churches that censure abortion providers and advocates will eventually be perceived as fundamentally treasonous. Nor can a revival of the Church's oversight of morals take place in the absence of practical catholicity among the churches. How, after all, can we speak realistically about the churches' accepting responsibility for their members' morals when the churches cannot agree on what those morals should be?

For all that, a revival of the Church's active practice of the *censura morum*—in short, a revival of the practice of church discipline, including the sanctions of rebuke, censure, and excommunication—would challenge, more consistently than the Christian right has done, the modern assumptions both that religion is strictly private and that the state is competent to correct morals. Such a revival would, moreover, provide some glimmer of hope for avoiding the unhappy choice between renewed religious war and privatization of religion.

Peter J. Leithart *is Pastor of Reformed Heritage Presbyterian Church in Alabaster, Alabama, and author of* The Kingdom and the Power *(Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing).*

The Saints of AIDS

Charles Pinches

On the day after World AIDS Day, the displays that blocked the way into the main door of the student center lie on their sides, somewhat torn and soiled, ready for disposal. I read the names and brief biographies of some of the very many who have died with the dread disease. The last line in each biography is the most carefully phrased. It refers to a way the particular victim will be remembered: Arthur Ashe's wife still plays tennis . . . Robert Reed can yet be seen in reruns of the Brady Bunch . . . Cleve Jones, a San Francisco gay activist, will live in perpetuity on the "name quilt" that apparently was his idea. These are the saints of AIDS, whom, we were told with great fervency, we cannot forget, even as now they lie awaiting campus clean-up.

Ours is a Catholic institution of higher learning, Jesuit Catholic. Our students are perhaps too famil-

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iar with the symbols of their church to recognize their pattern elsewhere. The saints of AIDS, the symbols of our AIDS awareness (ribbons, red ones of course), proclamation of the news about AIDS, the recitations of the creeds of AIDS, whereby we confess our belief in the saving power of medical research and the efficacy of the knowledge of infection control, and, dare I say it, the distribution of the sacrament of AIDS, offered freely to all comers: wafer-sized, yes, but not to be consumed but unrolled and applied for protection.

Should I worry about the consuming effect the zeal of AIDS might have on a campus such as ours? I'm quite sure we've been spared the real zeal that burst out on many other campuses better known for their PC fervor. I suspect our university joins in these events primarily because we want desperately not to be left behind. Scranton's is a real campus, we're hoping, even if it is in Scranton and governed by a Jesuit who almost always wears his collar. Mind you, for myself, I was just as glad that I had no scheduled classes on AIDS day, and so escaped the scrutiny of those on the lookout for red ribbons. But there have been thought police before, and they will come again. Those of us who feel as aliens amid the solemnity of a World AIDS Day may wish for a more comfortable space where our own rituals predominate, as we suppose they once did. But if we are true to these rituals we will know that they do not teach us to rule others as others might rule us, but rather to witness to the truth even as we know it will be rejected, by thought police and many others, of any generation.

No, what is most unsettling about World AIDS Day is not the threat it poses to those of us whose sensibilities hold us back from full participation. It lies rather in the shallowness of AIDS symbols themselves, and of the generation that fixes upon them with such desperation. To return to the latex wafer, one might observe that the protection it affords witnesses clearly enough to the fact that the point of AIDS awareness is not to follow after young Cleve Jones, brave soul that he may have been, but rather to avoid his sad fate. We honor Cleve at the same time that we endeavor to teach others how to be unlike him, even if only by being one step more careful in their acts of communion with others, keeping their fluids to themselves.

The saints of AIDS are united in nothing but their mode of death, a point Arthur Ashe saw, and objected to. As such, they fail to offer us any corporate wisdom about how to live. Their remembrance becomes, therefore, completely sentimental: we wish they hadn't gotten AIDS and died, we hope we won't get it, and we demand more funds for a cure for those suffering souls who fall in the empty space, between us and the saints. World AIDS as such cannot change our lives. As a day, and no more, it reminds us first to protect ourselves from AIDS, and from communing too closely with others in the process, while at the same time it assuages our guilt at being one of the lucky ones by encouraging us to "remember" the saints of AIDS, about whom we know almost nothing but that they had it.

It is required of Christian saints that they die as they lived. With Jesus, their death bears witness to the power and truth of their lives, and, also like Jesus, remembering them requires of Christians that they recognize that following the saints in life may well mean following them in death. But as Christians also claim, only such a death can bring true life, for it does not teach us that we should live protected from others whom we fear might cause our death, but rather in communion with them, even if this might kill us.

This is a lesson far more difficult to learn. I read recently of a Christian, Dale Recinella, who has learned it. A graduate of Notre Dame Law School, Dale quit his job as a securities lawyer in Tallahassee after the "Holy Spirit fell upon him like a ton of bricks" to help out at the Good News Ministries. There encountering his first AIDS sufferers, he was gripped by "a tremendous revulsion," for he felt he had to "protect his family from them." Now he works with people with AIDS daily, seeing more than one through to their deaths. Others besides Dale, not all Christian and not all heterosexual, also have learned this lesson, perhaps as they cared for the likes of Cleve Jones, quite unaware of his AIDS sainthood. Yet with all due respect to the power of the saints and the efficacy of the sacrament, I suspect precious few of us, on this campus or any other, learned anything like what we really need to know about AIDS on World AIDS Day.

CHARLES PINCHES *teaches in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Scranton.*

ON THE OTHER HAND

Bipartisan Death Rows

Peter L. Berger

There used to be an ideological division of labor in what might be called the terminal issues of American public life. Conservatives were in favor of the death penalty but opposed to abortion. Liberals, conversely, favored abortion but were against the death penalty. This divide is now in process of being bridged. Perhaps this is part of the larger healing

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process of which much has been written lately, as for instance in connection with the recent lifting of the ban on trade with Vietnam. Perhaps America is finally becoming a more mature nation, its instincts of compassion tempered with realism, its innate toughness fortified by empathy with the victims of injustice. In any case, there is now emerging a new bipartisan consensus in favor of *both* abortion *and* the death penalty.

Readers of First Things have not had to complain about lack of coverage of the abortion issue, but they may not have been as aware of the progress on the other issue. A number of prominent politicians represent the new consensus. There is Governor William Weld of Massachusetts, whose credentials as a moderate Republican of possibly presidential timber have been enhanced by his firm pro-choice position and his tenacious efforts to reintroduce capital punishment in the state. On the Democratic side there is former Governor Douglas Wilder of Virginia, who has been hailed as a living example of the civilizing effect that black elected officials are increasingly having on American government. A few months ago, still on Gov. Wilder's watch, there was a small problem. A prisoner due to be executed was unable to walk. (It should be mentioned that he was also black, so no racial prejudice could be charged.) The state was getting ready to construct a ramp so that this individual could be wheeled right into the death chamber. In the event, this proved to be unnecessary: he felt that being rolled in on a wheelchair was undignified and, somehow, he managed to limp to his execution.

However, without in any way diminishing the achievements of leaders like Weld and Wilder, it is President Clinton himself who embodies the new consensus in the most impressive way. A certain moral high point came in the 1992 electoral campaign when Dan Quayle in one of his speeches questioned Clinton's good faith in claiming to be tough on crime. George Stephanopoulos indignantly pointed out that, during his period as governor of Arkansas, Clinton had allowed four executions to be carried out. So he did. Actually, he signed the orders for about seventy executions, but most of these, through no fault of his, were not carried out. Even in the enlightened state of Arkansas desperate defense lawyers have recourse to various legal maneuvers to stave off executions—just the sort of frivolous delaying tactics that the Supreme Court, in another show of growing ideological consensus, is now determined to stamp out.

The last person executed under Clinton's governorship was Rickie Rector. The details of this case were reported in a long story in, of all places, the *New Yorker*. Rector had participated in a robbery in the course of which he had killed a policeman. He then shot himself in the head in an attempt at suicide, either in an effort to avoid capture or as an act of remorse. He failed to kill himself, but was left severely brain-damaged. He had the mental age of a child of five. As usual, the case made its way through the courts, but in this instance all attempts to avoid the execution of the death sentence failed. Clinton was then out of state on the campaign trail. He returned to Little Rock so as to be in his office while the execution was carried out. Consequently, there is no possibility of denying him due credit for it. According to eyewitness accounts Rector was quite unaware of what was happening to him. When the executioner had difficulty inserting the poison syringe, Rector tried to help him. It had been Rector's habit in prison to save a portion of his dessert cake for an evening snack. When his cell was cleaned out after the execution, the usual piece of cake was found left behind. He had evidently planned to eat it afterward.

The Rector case raises the interesting question of whether a severely retarded individual should be subject to the death penalty. An argument could be made that it is more humane to execute someone who does not know what is happening than someone who is fully conscious of the proceedings. This question cannot be pursued here. Rather, attention should be drawn to the international dimension of this issue. The United States is the only Western democracy that continues to carry out the death penalty. There had, of course, been an interruption while the Supreme Court pondered whether the constitutional prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment applied here. Since the wise (and, incidentally, strict-constructionist) decision that it did not, executions have been steadily increasing and in a number of states have become routine. Texas, with the highest number of individuals on death row, has inaugurated a work program just for them—a garment factory. (Assurances have been given that none of its products will be exported to China.) The Clinton crime bill, of course, greatly increases the number of offences punishable by death under federal jurisdiction. Some foreigners, especially Europeans and Latin Americans, have difficulty understanding this. The *Spectator* of London recently published a cartoon showing an individual being led to an electric chair in front of which a sign said, "Please wait to be seated." This, of course, was intended as a blatantly anti-American comment, such as one has come to expect from the English right. Yet perhaps there was here also an unconscious acknowledgment of a feature of American exceptionalism—the capacity for compassion and courtesy even when robust measures have to be taken.

There is no reason to fear that the United States will abandon its splendidly isolated practice of capital punishment any time in the near future. There is no constituency for abolition either on the right or the left. However, as more and more people move through America's death row, two modest pro-

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posals may be in order.

The first (Republicans will note with approval) would require no state intervention. It is high time that the several occupations engaged in life termination be given proper professional training. Increasingly now the death penalty is carried out by lethal injection, a procedure that is not only more humane than the earlier methods but is also inherently a medical procedure. The indicated curriculum would plausibly combine paramedical and paralegal training. It would unite in one program the technical personnel dedicated to abortions, executions, and assisted suicides. In addition to the instructors in practical procedures, the faculty could include morticians, bereavement counselors, and medical ethicists. The course would culminate in a diploma in Individualized Exit Facilitation (IEF). One or another Southern state university could certainly be induced to pioneer in this field.

The second proposal would respond to the aforementioned international aspect of this issue. Yet another growing bipartisan consensus concerns the place of human rights in American foreign policy. The United States Information Agency should make a concerted effort to explain the American position on life termination in all its aspects and its relation to fundamental human rights. The Agency for International Development should include individuals with IEF diplomas in its programs in the underdeveloped countries. Most important, the State Department should include the status of IEF laws and practices in its annual report on human rights in the world. This last suggestion would also have a domestic benefit. Year by year, Americans can read the State Department report and be proud. They already know how superior they are to China. It is time to feel superior to Switzerland.

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Loss

Like a needy relative
It has moved beside you always
Lowering its shamed brow
In a long apology of existence.

It was Loss playing marbles
In your hair—*ach!*—that drew back
The night covers, stacked the dark
With figures of gaunt recall.

While you tarried, Loss removed
The laces from shoes, scattered
Your papers, reducing matter
By particles and whispers.

It took your people from the dialogue,
Smashed vases and bank accounts,
Lifted youth from your heart like a wallet.
And when nothing remained to lose,

Imperceptible, unrelenting,
It sent its serfs trudging still
Around the clock to clean you out,
Carrying off in sheets your silence.

Victoria McCabe

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Evangelicals & Catholics Together:
The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium

The following statement is the product of consultation, beginning in September 1992, between Evangelical Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians. Appended to the text is a list of participants in the consultation and of others who have given their support to this declaration.

Introduction

We are Evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics who have been led through prayer, study, and discussion to common convictions about Christian faith and mission. This statement cannot speak officially for our communities. It does intend to speak responsibly from our communities and to our communities. In this statement we address what we have discovered both about our unity and about our differences. We are aware that our experience reflects the distinctive circumstances and opportunities of Evangelicals and Catholics living together in North America. At the same time, we believe that what we have discovered and resolved is pertinent to the relationship between Evangelicals and Catholics in other parts of the world. We therefore commend this statement to their prayerful consideration.

As the Second Millennium draws to a close, the Christian mission in world history faces a moment of daunting opportunity and responsibility. If in the merciful and mysterious ways of God the Second Coming is delayed, we enter upon a Third Millennium that could be, in the words of John Paul II, "a springtime of world missions." (*Redemptoris Missio*)

As Christ is one, so the Christian mission is one. That one mission can be and should be advanced in diverse ways. Legitimate diversity, however, should not be confused with existing divisions between Christians that obscure the one Christ and hinder the one mission. There is a necessary connection between the visible unity of Christians and the mission of the one Christ. We together pray for the fulfillment of the prayer of Our Lord: "May they all be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, so also may they be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17) We together, Evangelicals and Catholics, confess our sins against the unity that Christ intends for all his disciples.

The one Christ and one mission includes many other Christians, notably the Eastern Orthodox and those Protestants not commonly identified as Evangelical. All Christians are encompassed in the prayer, "May they all be one." Our present statement attends to the specific problems and opportunities in the relationship between Roman Catholics and Evangelical Protestants.

As we near the Third Millennium, there are approximately 1.7 billion Christians in the world. About a billion of these are Catholics and more than 300 million are Evangelical Protestants. The century now drawing to a close has been the greatest century of missionary expansion in Christian history. We pray and we believe that this expansion has prepared the way for yet greater missionary endeavor in the first century of the Third Millennium.

The two communities in world Christianity that are most evangelistically assertive and most rapidly growing are Evangelicals and Catholics. In many parts of the world, the relationship between these communities is marked more by conflict than by cooperation, more by animosity than by love, more by suspicion than by trust, more by propaganda and ignorance than by respect for the truth. This is alarmingly the case in Latin America, increasingly the case in Eastern Europe, and too often the case in our own country.

Without ignoring conflicts between and within other Christian communities, we address ourselves to the relationship between Evangelicals and Catholics, who constitute the growing edge of missionary expansion at present and, most likely, in the century ahead. In doing so, we hope that what we

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have discovered and resolved may be of help in other situations of conflict, such as that among Orthodox, Evangelicals, and Catholics in Eastern Europe. While we are gratefully aware of ongoing efforts to address tensions among these communities, the shameful reality is that, in many places around the world, the scandal of conflict between Christians obscures the scandal of the cross, thus crippling the one mission of the one Christ.

As in times past, so also today and in the future, the Christian mission, which is directed to the entire human community, must be advanced against formidable opposition. In some cultures, that mission encounters resurgent spiritualities and religions that are explicitly hostile to the claims of the Christ. Islam, which in many instances denies the freedom to witness to the Gospel, must be of increasing concern to those who care about religious freedom and the Christian mission. Mutually respectful conversation between Muslims and Christians should be encouraged in the hope that more of the world will, in the oft-repeated words of John Paul II, "open the door to Christ." At the same time, in our so-called developed societies, a widespread secularization increasingly descends into a moral, intellectual, and spiritual nihilism that denies not only the One who is the Truth but the very idea of truth itself.

We enter the twenty-first century without illusions. With Paul and the Christians of the first century, we know that "we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6) As Evangelicals and Catholics, we dare not by needless and loveless conflict between ourselves give aid and comfort to the enemies of the cause of Christ.

The love of Christ compels us and we are therefore resolved to avoid such conflict between our communities and, where such conflict exists, to do what we can to reduce and eliminate it. Beyond that, we are called and we are therefore resolved to explore patterns of working and witnessing together in order to advance the one mission of Christ. Our common resolve is not based merely on a desire for harmony. We reject any appearance of harmony that is purchased at the price of truth. Our common resolve is made imperative by obedience to the truth of God revealed in the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, and by trust in the promise of the Holy Spirit's guidance until Our Lord returns in glory to judge the living and the dead.

The mission that we embrace together is the necessary consequence of the faith that we affirm together.

We Affirm Together

Jesus Christ is Lord. That is the first and final affirmation that Christians make about all of reality. He is the One sent by God to be Lord and Savior of all: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4) Christians are people ahead of time, those who proclaim now what will one day be acknowledged by all, that Jesus Christ is Lord. (Philippians 2)

We affirm together that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ. Living faith is active in love that is nothing less than the love of Christ, for we together say with Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2)

All who accept Christ as Lord and Savior are brothers and sisters in Christ. Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. We have not chosen one another, just as we have not chosen Christ. He has chosen us, and he has chosen us to be his together. (John 15) However imperfect our communion with one another, however deep our disagreements with one another, we recognize that there is but one church of Christ. There is one church because there is one Christ and the church is his body. However difficult the way, we recognize that we are called by God to a fuller realization of our unity in the body of Christ. The only unity to which we would give expression is unity in the truth, and the truth is this: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4)

We affirm together that Christians are to teach and live in obedience to the divinely inspired Scriptures, which are the infallible Word of God. We further affirm together that Christ has promised to his church the gift of the Holy Spirit who will lead us into all truth in discerning and declaring the teaching of Scripture. (John 16) We recognize together that the Holy Spirit has so guided his church in the past. In, for instance, the formation of the canon of the Scriptures, and in the orthodox response to the great Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the early centuries, we confidently acknowledge the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In faithful response to the Spirit's leading, the church formulated the Apostles Creed, which we can and hereby do affirm together as an accurate statement of scriptural truth:

> I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
>
> I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the

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third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

We Hope Together

We hope together that all people will come to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This hope makes necessary the church's missionary zeal. "But how are they to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10) The church is by nature, in all places and at all times, in mission. Our missionary hope is inspired by the revealed desire of God that "all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2)

The church lives by and for the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28)

Unity and love among Christians is an integral part of our missionary witness to the Lord whom we serve. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13) If we do not love one another, we disobey his command and contradict the Gospel we declare.

As Evangelicals and Catholics, we pray that our unity in the love of Christ will become ever more evident as a sign to the world of God's reconciling power. Our communal and ecclesial separations are deep and long standing. We acknowledge that we do not know the schedule nor do we know the way to the greater visible unity for which we hope. We do know that existing patterns of distrustful polemic and conflict are not the way. We do know that God who has brought us into communion with himself through Christ intends that we also be in communion with one another. We do know that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14) and as we are drawn closer to him—walking in that way, obeying that truth, living that life—we are drawn closer to one another.

Whatever may be the future form of the relationship between our communities, we can, we must, and we will begin now the work required to remedy what we know to be wrong in that relationship. Such work requires trust and understanding, and trust and understanding require an assiduous attention to truth. We do not deny but clearly assert that there are disagreements between us. Misunderstandings, misrepresentations, and caricatures of one another, however, are not disagreements. These distortions must be cleared away if we are to search through our honest differences in a manner consistent with what we affirm and hope together on the basis of God's Word.

We Search Together

Together we search for a fuller and clearer understanding of God's revelation in Christ and his will for his disciples. Because of the limitations of human reason and language, which limitations are compounded by sin, we cannot understand completely the transcendent reality of God and his ways. Only in the End Time will we see face to face and know as we are known. (1 Corinthians 13) We now search together in confident reliance upon God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, the sure testimony of Holy Scripture, and the promise of the Spirit to his church. In this search to understand the truth more fully and clearly, we need one another. We are both informed and limited by the histories of our communities and by our own experiences. Across the divides of communities and experiences, we need to challenge one another, always speaking the truth in love building up the Body. (Ephesians 4)

We do not presume to suggest that we can resolve the deep and long-standing differences between Evangelicals and Catholics. Indeed these differences may never be resolved short of the Kingdom Come. Nonetheless, we are not permitted simply to resign ourselves to differences that divide us from one another. Not all differences are authentic disagreements, nor need all disagreements divide. Differences and disagreements must be tested in disciplined and sustained conversation. In this connection we warmly commend and encourage the formal theological dialogues of recent years between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals.

We note some of the differences and disagreements that must be addressed more fully and candidly in order to strengthen between us a relationship of trust in obedience to truth. Among points of difference in doctrine, worship, practice, and piety that are frequently thought to divide us are these:

- The church as an integral part of the Gospel or the church as a communal consequence of the Gospel.
- The church as visible communion or invisible fellowship of true believers.
- The sole authority of Scripture (*sola scriptura*) or Scripture as authoritatively interpreted in the church.

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- The "soul freedom" of the individual Christian or the Magisterium (teaching authority) of the community.
- The church as local congregation or universal communion.
- Ministry ordered in apostolic succession or the priesthood of all believers.
- Sacraments and ordinances as symbols of grace or means of grace.
- The Lord's Supper as eucharistic sacrifice or memorial meal.
- Remembrance of Mary and the saints or devotion to Mary and the saints.
- Baptism as sacrament of regeneration or testimony to regeneration.

This account of differences is by no means complete. Nor is the disparity between positions always so sharp as to warrant the "or" in the above formulations. Moreover, among those recognized as Evangelical Protestants there are significant differences between, for example, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Calvinists on these questions. But the differences mentioned above reflect disputes that are deep and long standing. In at least some instances, they reflect authentic disagreements that have been in the past and are at present barriers to full communion between Christians.

On these questions, and other questions implied by them, Evangelicals hold that the Catholic Church has gone beyond Scripture, adding teachings and practices that detract from or compromise the Gospel of God's saving grace in Christ. Catholics, in turn, hold that such teachings and practices are grounded in Scripture and belong to the fullness of God's revelation. Their rejection, Catholics say, results in a truncated and reduced understanding of the Christian reality.

Again, we cannot resolve these disputes here. We can and do affirm together that the entirety of Christian faith, life, and mission finds its source, center, and end in the crucified and risen Lord. We can and do pledge that we will continue to search together—through study, discussion, and prayer—for a better understanding of one another's convictions and a more adequate comprehension of the truth of God in Christ. We can testify now that in our searching together we have discovered what we can affirm together and what we can hope together and, therefore, how we can contend together.

We Contend Together

As we are bound together by Christ and his cause, so we are bound together in contending against all that opposes Christ and his cause. We are emboldened not by illusions of easy triumph but by faith in his certain triumph. Our Lord wept over Jerusalem, and he now weeps over a world that does not know the time of its visitation. The raging of the principalities and powers may increase as the End Time nears, but the outcome of the contest is assured.

The cause of Christ is the cause and mission of the church, which is, first of all, to proclaim the Good News that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5) To proclaim this Gospel and to sustain the community of faith, worship, and discipleship that is gathered by this Gospel is the first and chief responsibility of the church. All other tasks and responsibilities of the church are derived from and directed toward the mission of the Gospel.

Christians individually and the church corporately also have a responsibility for the right ordering of civil society. We embrace this task soberly; knowing the consequences of human sinfulness, we resist the utopian conceit that it is within our powers to build the Kingdom of God on earth. We embrace this task hopefully; knowing that God has called us to love our neighbor, we seek to secure for all a greater measure of civil righteousness and justice, confident that he will crown our efforts when he rightly orders all things in the coming of his Kingdom.

In the exercise of these public responsibilities there has been in recent years a growing convergence and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics. We thank God for the discovery of one another in contending for a common cause. Much more important, we thank God for the discovery of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our cooperation as citizens is animated by our convergence as Christians. We promise one another that we will work to deepen, build upon, and expand this pattern of convergence and cooperation.

Together we contend for the truth that politics, law, and culture must be secured by moral truth. With the Founders of the American experiment, we declare, "We hold these truths." With them, we hold that this constitutional order is composed not just of rules and procedures but is most essentially a moral experiment. With them, we hold that only a virtuous people can be free and just, and that virtue is secured by religion. To propose that securing civil virtue is the purpose of religion is blasphemous. To deny that securing civil virtue is a benefit of religion is blindness.

Americans are drifting away from, are often explicitly defying, the constituting truths of this experiment in ordered liberty. Influential sectors of the culture are laid waste by relativism, anti-intellectualism, and nihilism that deny the very idea of truth. Against such influences in both the elite and popular culture, we appeal to reason and religion in contending for the foundational truths of our constitutional order.

More specifically, we contend together for religious freedom. We do so for the sake of religion, but also because religious freedom is the first freedom,

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the source and shield of all human freedoms. In their relationship to God, persons have a dignity and responsibility that transcends, and thereby limits, the authority of the state and of every other merely human institution.

Religious freedom is itself grounded in and is a product of religious faith, as is evident in the history of Baptists and others in this country. Today we rejoice together that the Roman Catholic Church—as affirmed by the Second Vatican Council and boldly exemplified in the ministry of John Paul II—is strongly committed to religious freedom and, consequently, to the defense of all human rights. Where Evangelicals and Catholics are in severe and sometimes violent conflict, such as parts of Latin America, we urge Christians to embrace and act upon the imperative of religious freedom. Religious freedom will not be respected by the state if it is not respected by Christians or, even worse, if Christians attempt to recruit the state in repressing religious freedom.

In this country, too, freedom of religion cannot be taken for granted but requires constant attention. We strongly affirm the separation of church and state, and just as strongly protest the distortion of that principle to mean the separation of religion from public life. We are deeply concerned by the courts' narrowing of the protections provided by the "free exercise" provision of the First Amendment and by an obsession with "no establishment" that stifles the necessary role of religion in American life. As a consequence of such distortions, it is increasingly the case that wherever government goes religion must retreat, and government increasingly goes almost everywhere. Religion, which was privileged and foundational in our legal order, has in recent years been penalized and made marginal. We contend together for a renewal of the constituting vision of the place of religion in the American experiment.

Religion and religiously grounded moral conviction is not an alien or threatening force in our public life. For the great majority of Americans, morality is derived, however variously and confusedly, from religion. The argument, increasingly voiced in sectors of our political culture, that religion should be excluded from the public square must be recognized as an assault upon the most elementary principles of democratic governance. That argument needs to be exposed and countered by leaders, religious and other, who care about the integrity of our constitutional order.

The pattern of convergence and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics is, in large part, a result of common effort to protect human life, especially the lives of the most vulnerable among us. With the Founders, we hold that all human beings are endowed by their Creator with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The statement that the unborn child is a human life that—barring natural misfortune or lethal intervention—will become what everyone recognizes as a human baby is not a religious assertion. It is a statement of simple biological fact. That the unborn child has a right to protection, including the protection of law, is a moral statement supported by moral reason and biblical truth.

We, therefore, will persist in contending—we will not be discouraged but will multiply every effort—in order to secure the legal protection of the unborn. Our goals are: to secure due process of law for the unborn, to enact the most protective laws and public policies that are politically possible, and to reduce dramatically the incidence of abortion. We warmly commend those who have established thousands of crisis pregnancy and postnatal care centers across the country, and urge that such efforts be multiplied. As the unborn must be protected, so also must women be protected from their current rampant exploitation by the abortion industry and by fathers who refuse to accept responsibility for mothers and children. Abortion on demand, which is the current rule in America, must be recognized as a massive attack on the dignity, rights, and needs of women.

Abortion is the leading edge of an encroaching culture of death. The helpless old, the radically handicapped, and others who cannot effectively assert their rights are increasingly treated as though they have no rights. These are the powerless who are exposed to the will and whim of those who have power over them. We will do all in our power to resist proposals for euthanasia, eugenics, and population control that exploit the vulnerable, corrupt the integrity of medicine, deprave our culture, and betray the moral truths of our constitutional order.

In public education, we contend together for schools that transmit to coming generations our cultural heritage, which is inseparable from the formative influence of religion, especially Judaism and Christianity. Education for responsible citizenship and social behavior is inescapably moral education. Every effort must be made to cultivate the morality of honesty, law observance, work, caring, chastity, mutual respect between the sexes, and readiness for marriage, parenthood, and family. We reject the claim that, in any or all of these areas, "tolerance" requires the promotion of moral equivalence between the normative and the deviant. In a democratic society that recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for the formation of their children, schools are to assist and support, not oppose and undermine, parents in the exercise of their responsibility.

We contend together for a comprehensive policy of parental choice in education. This is a moral question of simple justice. Parents are the primary educators of their children; the state and other institutions should be supportive of their exercise of that responsibility. We affirm policies that enable parents to effectively exercise their right and responsibility to choose the schooling that they consider best for their children.

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We contend together against the widespread pornography in our society, along with the celebration of violence, sexual depravity, and antireligious bigotry in the entertainment media. In resisting such cultural and moral debasement, we recognize the legitimacy of boycotts and other consumer actions, and urge the enforcement of existing laws against obscenity. We reject the self-serving claim of the peddlers of depravity that this constitutes illegitimate censorship. We reject the assertion of the unimaginative that artistic creativity is to be measured by the capacity to shock or outrage. A people incapable of defending decency invites the rule of viciousness, both public and personal.

We contend for a renewed spirit of acceptance, understanding, and cooperation across lines of religion, race, ethnicity, sex, and class. We are all created in the image of God and are accountable to him. That truth is the basis of individual responsibility and equality before the law. The abandonment of that truth has resulted in a society at war with itself, pitting citizens against one another in bitter conflicts of group grievances and claims to entitlement. Justice and social amity require a redirection of public attitudes and policies so that rights are joined to duties and people are rewarded according to their character and competence.

We contend for a free society, including a vibrant market economy. A free society requires a careful balancing between economics, politics, and culture. Christianity is not an ideology and therefore does not prescribe precisely how that balance is to be achieved in every circumstance. We affirm the importance of a free economy not only because it is more efficient but because it accords with a Christian understanding of human freedom. Economic freedom, while subject to grave abuse, makes possible the patterns of creativity, cooperation, and accountability that contribute to the common good.

We contend together for a renewed appreciation of Western culture. In its history and missionary reach, Christianity engages all cultures while being captive to none. We are keenly aware of, and grateful for, the role of Christianity in shaping and sustaining the Western culture of which we are part. As with all of history, that culture is marred by human sinfulness. Alone among world cultures, however, the West has cultivated an attitude of self-criticism and of eagerness to learn from other cultures. What is called multiculturalism can mean respectful attention to human differences. More commonly today, however, multiculturalism means affirming all cultures but our own. Welcoming the contributions of other cultures and being ever alert to the limitations of our own, we receive Western culture as our legacy and embrace it as our task in order to transmit it as a gift to future generations.

We contend for public policies that demonstrate renewed respect for the irreplaceable role of mediating structures in society—notably the family, churches, and myriad voluntary associations. The state is not the society, and many of the most important functions of society are best addressed in independence from the state. The role of churches in responding to a wide variety of human needs, especially among the poor and marginal, needs to be protected and strengthened. Moreover, society is not the aggregate of isolated individuals bearing rights but is composed of communities that inculcate responsibility, sustain shared memory, provide mutual aid, and nurture the habits that contribute to both personal well-being and the common good. Most basic among such communities is the community of the family. Laws and social policies should be designed with particular care for the stability and flourishing of families. While the crisis of the family in America is by no means limited to the poor or to the underclass, heightened attention must be paid those who have become, as a result of well-intended but misguided statist policies, virtual wards of the government.

Finally, we contend for a realistic and responsible understanding of America's part in world affairs. Realism and responsibility require that we avoid both the illusions of unlimited power and righteousness, on the one hand, and the timidity and selfishness of isolationism, on the other. U.S. foreign policy should reflect a concern for the defense of democracy and, wherever prudent and possible, the protection and advancement of human rights, including religious freedom.

The above is a partial list of public responsibilities on which we believe there is a pattern of convergence and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics. We reject the notion that this constitutes a partisan "religious agenda" in American politics. Rather, this is a set of directions oriented to the common good and discussable on the basis of public reason. While our sense of civic responsibility is informed and motivated by Christian faith, our intention is to elevate the level of political and moral discourse in a manner that excludes no one and invites the participation of all people of good will. To that end, Evangelicals and Catholics have made an inestimable contribution in the past and, it is our hope, will contribute even more effectively in the future.

We are profoundly aware that the American experiment has been, all in all, a blessing to the world and a blessing to us as Evangelical and Catholic Christians. We are determined to assume our full share of responsibility for this "one nation under God," believing it to be a nation under the judgment, mercy, and providential care of the Lord of the nations to whom alone we render unqualified allegiance.

We Witness Together

The question of Christian witness unavoidably returns us to points of serious tension between Evan-

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gelicals and Catholics. Bearing witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ and his will for our lives is an integral part of Christian discipleship. The achievement of good will and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics must not be at the price of the urgency and clarity of Christian witness to the Gospel. At the same time, and as noted earlier, Our Lord has made clear that the evidence of love among his disciples is an integral part of that Christian witness.

Today, in this country and elsewhere, Evangelicals and Catholics attempt to win "converts" from one another's folds. In some ways, this is perfectly understandable and perhaps inevitable. In many instances, however, such efforts at recruitment undermine the Christian mission by which we are bound by God's Word and to which we have recommitted ourselves in this statement. It should be clearly understood between Catholics and Evangelicals that Christian witness is of necessity aimed at conversion. Authentic conversion is—in its beginning, in its end, and all along the way—conversion to God in Christ by the power of the Spirit. In this connection, we embrace as our own the explanation of the Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversation (1988):

> Conversion is turning away from all that is opposed to God, contrary to Christ's teaching, and turning to God, to Christ, the Son, through the work of the Holy Spirit. It entails a turning from the self-centeredness of sin to faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. Conversion is a passing from one way of life to another new one, marked with the newness of Christ. It is a continuing process so that the whole life of a Christian should be a passage from death to life, from error to truth, from sin to grace. Our life in Christ demands continual growth in God's grace. Conversion is personal but not private. Individuals respond in faith to God's call but faith comes from hearing the proclamation of the word of God and is to be expressed in the life together in Christ that is the Church.

By preaching, teaching, and life example, Christians witness to Christians and non-Christians alike. We seek and pray for the conversion of others, even as we recognize our own continuing need to be fully converted. As we strive to make Christian faith and life—our own and that of others—ever more intentional rather than nominal, ever more committed rather than apathetic, we also recognize the different forms that authentic discipleship can take. As is evident in the two thousand year history of the church, and in our contemporary experience, there are different ways of being Christian, and some of these ways are distinctively marked by communal patterns of worship, piety, and catechesis. That we are all to be one does not mean that we are all to be identical in our way of following the one Christ. Such distinctive patterns of discipleship, it should be noted, are amply evident within the communion of the Catholic Church as well as within the many worlds of Evangelical Protestantism.

It is understandable that Christians who bear witness to the Gospel try to persuade others that their communities and traditions are more fully in accord with the Gospel. There is a necessary distinction between evangelizing and what is today commonly called proselytizing or "sheep stealing." We condemn the practice of recruiting people from another community for purposes of denominational or institutional aggrandizement. At the same time, our commitment to full religious freedom compels us to defend the legal freedom to proselytize even as we call upon Christians to refrain from such activity.

Three observations are in order in connection with proselytizing. First, as much as we might believe one community is more fully in accord with the Gospel than another, we as Evangelicals and Catholics affirm that opportunity and means for growth in Christian discipleship are available in our several communities. Second, the decision of the committed Christian with respect to his communal allegiance and participation must be assiduously respected. Third, in view of the large number of non-Christians in the world and the enormous challenge of our common evangelistic task, it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian community.

Christian witness must always be made in a spirit of love and humility. It must not deny but must readily accord to everyone the full freedom to discern and decide what is God's will for his life. Witness that is in service to the truth is in service to such freedom. Any form of coercion—physical, psychological, legal, economic—corrupts Christian witness and is to be unqualifiedly rejected. Similarly, bearing false witness against other persons and communities, or casting unjust and uncharitable suspicions upon them, is incompatible with the Gospel. Also to be rejected is the practice of comparing the strengths and ideals of one community with the weaknesses and failures of another. In describing the teaching and practices of other Christians, we must strive to do so in a way that they would recognize as fair and accurate.

In considering the many corruptions of Christian witness, we, Evangelicals and Catholics, confess that we have sinned against one another and against God. We most earnestly ask the forgiveness of God and one another, and pray for the grace to amend our own lives and that of our communities.

Repentance and amendment of life do not dissolve remaining differences between us. In the context of evangelization and "reevangelization," we encounter a major difference in our understanding of the relationship between baptism and the new birth in

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Christ. For Catholics, all who are validly baptized are born again and are truly, however imperfectly, in communion with Christ. That baptismal grace is to be continuingly reawakened and revivified through conversion. For most Evangelicals, but not all, the experience of conversion is to be followed by baptism as a sign of new birth. For Catholics, all the baptized are already members of the church, however dormant their faith and life; for many Evangelicals, the new birth requires baptismal initiation into the community of the born again. These differing beliefs about the relationship between baptism, new birth, and membership in the church should be honestly presented to the Christian who has undergone conversion. But again, his decision regarding communal allegiance and participation must be assiduously respected.

There are, then, differences between us that cannot be resolved here. But on this we are resolved: All authentic witness must be aimed at conversion to God in Christ by the power of the Spirit. Those converted—whether understood as having received the new birth for the first time or as having experienced the reawakening of the new birth originally bestowed in the sacrament of baptism—must be given full freedom and respect as they discern and decide the community in which they will live their new life in Christ. In such discernment and decision, they are ultimately responsible to God, and we dare not interfere with the exercise of that responsibility. Also in our differences and disagreements, we Evangelicals and Catholics commend one another to God "who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think." (Ephesians 3)

In this discussion of witnessing together we have touched on difficult and long-standing problems. The difficulties must not be permitted to overshadow the truths on which we are, by the grace of God, in firm agreement. As we grow in mutual understanding and trust, it is our hope that our efforts to evangelize will not jeopardize but will reinforce our devotion to the common tasks to which we have pledged ourselves in this statement.

Conclusion

Nearly two thousand years after it began, and nearly five hundred years after the divisions of the Reformation era, the Christian mission to the world is vibrantly alive and assertive. We do not know, we cannot know, what the Lord of history has in store for the Third Millennium. It may be the springtime of world missions and great Christian expansion. It may be the way of the cross marked by persecution and apparent marginalization. In different places and times, it will likely be both. Or it may be that Our Lord will return tomorrow.

We do know that his promise is sure, that we are enlisted for the duration, and that we are in this together. We do know that we must affirm and hope and search and contend and witness together, for we belong not to ourselves but to him who has purchased us by the blood of the cross. We do know that this is a time of opportunity—and, if of opportunity, then of responsibility—for Evangelicals and Catholics to be Christians together in a way that helps prepare the world for the coming of him to whom belongs the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. FT

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The Hipster and the Organization Man

Wilfred M. McClay

From all appearances, it is now back in style to be critical of American individualism. Indeed, that critique has never gone entirely out of style, and for very good reasons. But views on these matters also seem to follow cycles which, if not of Schlesingerian predictability, are nevertheless fairly regular; and for the past three decades the language of individual rights, entitlements, and self-realization has nearly always prevailed in the field of public discourse. There are signals emanating from various quarters, including even feeble and intermittent signals from the "communitarian" elements in the Clinton Administration, that this may have begun to change, at least on a rhetorical level. But if we are to have a national discussion of individualism, and if such a discussion is to move beyond simplistic platitudes, which often serve only to veil the instrumental partisanship that really motivates them—the ritual invocation of the 1980s as a "decade of greed," for example—we will have to think more deeply and carefully about what American individualism really is, and about the proper social preconditions for combating it.

This is not always easy to do. In his classic study *Childhood and Society*, the psychologist Erik Erikson observed that those who tried (as he did) to generalize about the character of Americans came up against a peculiar obstacle. "Whatever one may come to consider a truly American trait," Erikson mused, "can be shown to have its equally characteristic opposite." An intriguing thought: that the genius of American culture resides not in anything monolithic, but rather in its capacity for generating duality, even polarity. This thought seems to be supported by many of the most distinguished observers of American social character, from Alexis de Tocqueville on, who often take the country to task (or praise it) for diametrically opposite traits—sometimes even in the same work.

One can readily apply Erikson's observation to a variety of issues—for example, the tension between secularism and religious faith in American culture. But nowhere is it more relevant than in the perpetual opposition between individualism and social conformity, that great chestnut of American cultural analysis. The same fundamental questions arise again and again: are Americans excessively prone to willful individualism, or, conversely, are Americans excessively prone to mindless conformity? The best answer would seem to be, Yes, take your pick, for you can find ample support for either assertion. And if you like, feel free to take one of each. Americans are seen to be predisposed to a radical individualism that holds all social obligations and traditional forms of authority of no account, yet they also are seen to be imprisoned within an anxious and timid social conformism that smothers autonomy, expressiveness, and creativity in the name of sociability and order. Can it be that both are somehow enduringly true?

Tocqueville seemed to think so. One of the many virtues of his *Democracy in America* was its ability to formulate with precision both halves of the dualism, and the sound reasons for fearing each. Tocqueville distrusted individualism because he saw in it the seeds of a completely atomistic society in which every individual would withdraw into the sanctity of his own private world, with the consequence that all high-mindedness, public-spiritedness, and even public life itself would shrivel and die. But he also feared that America's egalitarian dogma would condemn it to a culture of pervasive mediocrity and envious sidelong glances, and would eventually lead it to embrace the secure and paternalistic collectivism of a centralized government—and thereby extinguish the liberty that he prized above all else. Although Tocqueville did not explore the connection between

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them systematically, he left the clear impression that these two pathologies of American democratic culture were not merely alternatives, but were somehow linked to one another, complementary expressions of a single modern condition.

Other writers, of course, took less subtle positions; and over the course of the nineteenth century, the prevailing views of different periods varied dramatically. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, whose intellectual influence in antebellum America was unparalleled, played the role of high priest for a religion of radical individualism and self-reliance, and argued that our souls faced no greater peril than the "vulgar" demands placed upon them by our social existence. Society itself, he proclaimed, was a "conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members," which served to "untune and dissipate the brave aspirant" and shunt him off into the shame of abject conformity. But in the years after the Civil War, social thinkers sounded a markedly different note in response to the increasingly organized conditions of their rapidly industrializing society. Edward Bellamy, author of the best-selling utopian novel *Looking Backward* (1888), reversed Emerson's view completely, disparaging the purely individual life as a "grotto" and exhorting his readers instead to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Nation, the highest expression of human solidarity. Similarly, pioneering sociologist Lester Frank Ward argued in 1893 that the reign of individualism had passed forever, and that the time had arrived for society to "imagine itself an individual" and "take its affairs into its own hands and shape its own destiny."

The more communitarian outlook suggested by Bellamy and Ward reached a culmination of sorts in the first two decades of the twentieth century, especially in the social vision of Progressive writers like Herbert Croly, Jane Addams, and John Dewey. But the ascendancy of this outlook proved short-lived. The rise of the Hitler and Stalin regimes, and of the anti-individualist ideologies advanced to legitimate them, put any such "socializing" tendencies on the defensive, and gave renewed vigor and credibility to the earlier Emersonian exaltation of the autonomous individual—which seemed only to intensify in the years after the Second World War. Indeed, the concept of "totalitarianism," so vital an element in the political discourse of the past half century, not only profoundly affected interpretations of foreign governments, it decisively affected the interpretation of social structure and social psychology in the United States itself. In the postwar years, it became the first order of business for sociologists, historians, theologians, and other social critics to alert Americans to the self's imminent peril, and provide resources for its defense.

Such was the gravamen of such influential postwar works as David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* or William Whyte's *The Organization Man*, which sought to guard the endangered self against what were seen as the totalistic demands of an organized and conforming world. The latter of these works also affixed a memorable label to the human results of those demands. Those Organization Men who toiled in the modern white-collar paperwork factory, Whyte asserted, "*belong* to it as well." Their fate exemplified the process of "collectivization" that had affected almost every field of work in modern America. Abandoning the Protestant Ethic of their elders, which had prescribed hard work and full-throttle competition as the route to individual salvation, they preferred the cozy security of a "Social Ethic" that "makes morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual." Man, in this view, is essentially a social creature who only becomes worthwhile "by sublimating himself in the group"; and the insistence upon individual freedom was a conspiracy against the solidarity of society.

Such works as *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man* contributed immeasurably to the tenacious image we have of the fifties as an era of torpid complacency and other-directed conformity. But that image is, of course, far from being the whole truth, especially about the intellectual ferment of those years. At the opposite end of the spectrum from the Organization Man's Social Ethic, yet in their own way equally representative of the time, were the frenzied neo-Whitmanesque effusions of Beat culture, and the hipster-existentialism of a work like Norman Mailer's essay "The White Negro" (1957), which would formulate the threat of "social totalitarianism" even more emphatically. One could barely "maintain the courage to be individual," Mailer lamented, in these "years of conformity and depression," when "a stench of fear has come out of every pore of American life," and the only example of courage "has been the isolated courage of isolated people." Onto this bleak scene, he proclaimed, had come the Hipster, who realizes that, given the poor choice we are offered between "quick death by the State" or "slow death by conformity," there is only one authentic way left to live: "to divorce oneself from society, to exist without roots, to set out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self." The social alternatives Mailer saw could not have been more stark and simple:

> One is Hip or one is Square (the alternative which each new generation coming into American life is beginning to feel), one is a rebel or one conforms, one is a frontiersman in the Wild West of American night life, or else a Square cell, trapped in the totalitarian tissues of American society, doomed willy-nilly to conform if one is to succeed.

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At stake was nothing less than "the liberation of the self from the Super-Ego of society"; and indeed the "nihilism of Hip proposes as its final tendency that every social restraint and category be removed." Old Victorian notions of individual agency and responsibility are also removed, for "the results of our actions are unforeseeable, and so we cannot know if we do good or bad." The Hipster sees "the context as generally dominating the man . . . because his character is less significant than the context in which he must function." Character, that great Victorian pillar, is at best a "perpetually ambivalent and dynamic" concept, existing in "an absolute relativity where there are no truths other than the isolated truths of what each observer feels at each instant of his existence." So the completely unencumbered, isolated, solitary self, obedient above all else to its own inner promptings, is also in thrall to a kind of fatalism. The Hipster surrenders control over his own actions and "lives with death as immediate danger," the complete existential hero.

If nothing else, this formulation shows how the fantasy of devouring social totalism and the fantasy of an unencumbered self arise together and stand in symbiosis. But the rebellious thrill that accompanied Mailer's words when they were written seems distant today. What were once vices are now habits, and in a society increasingly permeated by anomie and senseless mayhem, and by a popular culture that unceasingly glorifies them, Mailer's words seem almost tamely descriptive. One has seen or heard a thousand variations on them by now, in record liner notes, TV commercials, and celebrity interviews.

But precisely their tameness is an indication of the profound changes that have occurred in the intervening years. Not only Mailer's Hipster, but most men and women in modern Western societies are increasingly guided in their personal moral judgments by what Alasdair MacIntyre calls "emotivism," the doctrine that moral evaluations ultimately represent nothing more than expressions of personal preference, attitude, or feeling. This would seem to promise a chronically anarchic and ungovernable world. Yet, as MacIntyre shrewdly points out, the modern organizational world is easily able to accommodate such potentially disruptive moral subjectivism. It does so by requiring of us a split-mindedness, which abandons the ideal of a whole human life characteristic of traditional social orders. Instead, the modern social world is "bifurcated" into a "realm of the organizational" and a "realm of the personal," each of which obeys an entirely different moral calculus. In the former realm, "ends are taken to be given, and are not available for rational scrutiny"; in the latter, judgments and debates about "values" occur, but, rather like matters of taste, are not amenable to rational resolution.

MacIntyre's point bears directly upon the tension between the Hipster and the Organization Man. There is constant discussion in bifurcated societies about "a supposed opposition between individualism and collectivism," he observes, but in fact, such debates are superficial. The crucial fact is the one upon which the opposing parties agree: "[T]here are only two alternative modes of social life open to us, one in which the free and arbitrary choices of individuals are sovereign and one in which the bureaucracy is sovereign, precisely so that it may limit the free and arbitrary choices of individuals."

In light of this agreement, the policy debates dominating the politics of modern societies tend to vacillate between "a freedom which is nothing but a lack of regulation of individual behavior" and "forms of collectivist control designed only to limit the anarchy of self-interest." Such is the usual form taken by debates about "individualism," and such is the reason why the discussion always remains so shallow and unedifying. In contemporary society, organizational bureaucracy and individualism are partners as well as antagonists. Indeed, MacIntyre agreed, it is in the cultural climate of organizational bureaucracy "that the emotivist self is naturally at home." The Organization Man and the Hipster only think they are opposites. In a deeper sense, they are more like siblings: mutually defined, mutually enabling.

The fundamental problem is this: that large modern organizations are, by their nature, incapable of serving as genuine moral communities, able to embody moral authority and moral connectedness. For MacIntyre, this problem was especially pronounced in the case of the modern nation-state, which his prescriptions assaulted directly, comparing the present situation to the declining years of the Roman Empire. In that earlier time, "men and women of good will turned aside from the task of shoring up the Roman *imperium*," preferring instead to construct "new forms of community within which the moral life could be sustained" despite the surrounding darkness and barbarism. "[W]e too have reached that turning point," he declares darkly, and so our task is "the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us." The reconstruction of "community," of the possibility of social units mediating between radical individuals and the vast megastructures in which they are embedded, units in which connectedness and moral responsibility were once again possible, had become paramount in importance.

By recommending a turning away from the *imperium*, MacIntyre was asserting, in the tradition of Plato and Aristotle, the connection between a particular political regime or social order and a particular kind of soul. He was also implicitly rejecting the other time-honored answer to the individualist-collectivist quarrel: the idea of the national community,

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which had been a staple of progressive and liberal political rhetoric. In the United States, that idea's political high-water mark came in the presidency of Lyndon Johnson, who was committed, both in rhetoric and policy, to the conception of the nation as a community, even as a family, very much in contrast to the imagery of self-reliant frontier individualism. Unfortunately, however, Johnson presided over the most thorough shattering of the national unity since the Civil War, a development whose repercussions are still very much with us. The Vietnam War set off a profound weakening of the idea of national community, and undermined the authority of what Robert Wuthnow has called the "legitimating myths" of American national purpose and destiny; and subsequent events have not entirely restored these articles of national faith. It is notable that the symbolism of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington pointedly refuses the allusion to nation, offering instead the engraved names of the thousands of dead or missing *individuals*. When visitors come to the Vietnam Memorial, they have not come to gaze upon a grand monumental structure, but to pick out a familiar name on a collective tombstone. Like it or not, the Memorial fittingly represents our condition.

Even without Vietnam, the opposition to the idea of national community had been gathering force on its own in the 1950s and 1960s, from a variety of positions. The old Republican right, epitomized by the doughty Robert A. Taft of Ohio, had never accepted the understanding of the nation inherent in the New Deal. But this was not only a sentiment of the right. From their beginnings in the Port Huron Statement, the intellectuals of the New Left evinced a strong inclination towards decentralized, small-scale, participatory institutions, which would stand in stark contrast with the gigantic corporate, government, and academic bureaucracies that they saw dominating American life. The Black Power movement also advocated community self-governance and empowerment, and some mainstream politicians, notably Robert Kennedy, looked upon the idea with favor, seeing it as latter-day Jeffersonianism. The resurgence of ethnic sensibility in Northern cities, partly stemming from a proud or fearful distaste for the nation's growing homogenization, partly stimulated by resentment of bureaucratic or judicial intrusions into settled neighborhoods, also had the effect of asserting particularism and ethnic identity over against the national identification. And on the level of domestic national politics, beginning with the administration of Johnson's successor, Richard Nixon, through the successive administrations of Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush, the rhetoric of streamlining, decentralization, and New Federalism regularly took precedence over the appeal to a consolidated national community.

A notable exception to this last generalization, Jimmy Carter's use of William James' notion of a "moral equivalent of war" as the rhetorical frame for his comprehensive national energy policy, was not a notable success. In the era of Theodore Roosevelt, such appeals would surely have fallen upon more approving ears. In his 1979 "crisis of confidence" speech, Carter warned that the nation had embraced "a mistaken idea of freedom" and was heading down the path of "fragmentation and self-interest," of "self-indulgence and consumption." He urged that Americans instead "rebuild the unity and confidence of America," because only by following the "path of common purpose" could we come into an experience of "true freedom." Resonating with the time-honored language and imagery of national community, solidarity, and self-transcendence ("There is simply no way to avoid sacrifice"), Carter's eloquent political jeremiad turned out to be dramatically out of step with its historical moment. Surely one reason for this response was the waning appeal of the particular ideal of national community (though not necessarily of nationalism per se) to which he was appealing. Mr. Clinton's more ambitious health care reforms may meet a similar response from skeptical Americans who distinguish between sacrificing for their nation and surrendering to their government.

To be sure, a movement towards political decentralization has so far been more rhetorical than actual. The various New Federalisms have been notoriously shallow in practice, and the size of the Federal government has continued to grow rapidly during the very administrations that espoused reduction. Such may well continue to be the case; and the moral Hipsterism that seems to dominate our culture may also continue to flourish. Yet it seems possible that the social ideals capable of energizing Americans have begun to change, in roughly the same direction that MacIntyre's words suggest: towards disaggregation, dispersal, decentralization, and at the same time towards more intense experiences of community—that is, toward identification with social forms intimate enough to bridge the gap between isolated, morally irresponsible selves and ubiquitous, morally irresponsible organizations. For better or worse it is the *support group*, not the nation-state, that looks to be the model of revitalized social organization now and in the near term.

Progressives like Herbert Croly and Theodore Roosevelt had assumed that there could be such a thing as a national community, guided by a strong sense of the public interest and common weal, which could substitute for the small-scale community rendered obsolete by the inexorable consolidating effects of the industrial age. But their dreams were thwarted, because, as political scientist Michael Sandel argues, the nation-state has simply "proved too vast a scale across which to cultivate the shared self-understandings necessary to community." Since abandon-

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ing the Progressive notion of a common good, Sandel observes, we have limped along in a "procedural republic," in which the nation-state, after endowing individuals with "rights and entitlements," relies upon disembodied procedures, rather than on substantive and authoritative policies, to govern. This arrangement offers the individual little satisfaction or freedom. "It is," Sandel explains, "as though the unencumbered self presupposed by the liberal ethic had begun to come true—less liberated than disempowered, entangled in a network of obligations and involvements unassociated with any act of will and yet unmediated by those common identifications or expansive self-definitions that would make them tolerable." Such is the symbiosis of Hipster and Organization Man in action.

Are there other, more hopeful ways than withdrawal to deal with the problems engendered by the moral calculus of emotivism? Perhaps the most prominent work to grapple with this complex of issues in recent years was *Habits of the Heart* (1985), a collaborative exploration of contemporary American society whose principal author was the prominent sociologist Robert Bellah. Although the book was a kind of successor in genre to *The Lonely Crowd*, it was in the end a far more unsparing analysis of contemporary America. The decline of the public realm, the disappearance of civic consciousness, the disintegration of marriage and family life, the increasingly tenuous and openly self-serving character of human relations, the near-disappearance of religious values from our shared existence: all were laid out in considerable detail, using extensive interviews and case studies of "representative" Americans. Bellah's criticisms echoed, in many particulars, those embodied in the traditionalist-conservative critique of individualism, exemplified by the works of Russell Kirk and Robert Nisbet. Yet Bellah was anxious to offer ways of reconstituting community while remaining firmly situated within the liberal and pluralist tradition. The result of this balancing act, however, was a book that issued a resounding call for a restored "framework of values" upon which Americans can agree as a national community and upon which they can rebuild a common social life—but that was unfailingly nebulous in specifying what those values might be. A work that thus set out to address the disintegrative tendencies of contemporary American culture ended up capitulating to those tendencies at every crucial point.

At the heart of *Habits*' argument was its call for a return to America's "biblical" and "republican" traditions to counterbalance the dangerously amoral, selfish, emotivist, radical-individualist tendencies of unrestrained liberalism. Yet the book devoted little space to an explication of those traditions, and was vague as to the *authority* that these traditions are to possess. *Habits* preferred to frame the issue linguistically—as one of enhancing public discourse by bolstering Americans' "second language" of republican and biblical forms, and pointing out its embeddedness in the shared "narratives" of "communities of memory," as a counter to its "first language" of radical individualism. But one can be forgiven for asking: what authority do the authors believe should be given to, for example, the Ten Commandments, or to biblical teachings on sexuality? How much authority should the local community be permitted in establishing, for example, the boundaries of permissible expression, or regulating its own public schools? Or were those "biblical and republican" traditions to be appropriated piecemeal, purged of any elements that ran contrary to conventional wisdom? If so, how did such selectivity differ appreciably from the liberalism the authors were criticizing?

Habits took a similar approach to the two traditions it affirmed, hoping to gather the fruits of their cohesive effects without paying the price of accepting their authority. But surely the term "biblical tradition," for example, demands far more than that. The authors of *Habits* seem to envision strong personal morality without the taint of discipline or intolerance, strong communal and civic values without insularity or particularism, strong commitments without sanctions against those who disdain them, strong national self-esteem without national pride, patriotism without chauvinism, and so on. But anyone who takes seriously the binding power of the most fundamental sociological concepts will have trouble seeing this wish list as more than insubstantial word-combinations, wholly without plausible historical precedent. Tradition without tears is likely to be no tradition at all.

Another interesting, and very different, challenge to individualism has emerged out of the postwar feminist movement, in the form of an assertion that the ideal of individual autonomy is characteristically male. Individualism, in this view, far from being universal, is highly gender-specific; and as American intellectual and cultural history is rewritten, and the constitution of present-day American society changes, that gender-specificity will be revealed, relativized, and transcended. But such a view, though undoubtedly not without historical support—since eighteenth-century notions of individualism generally did not include women within their purview—seems hard to credit without a good deal of qualification, once modern feminism's own history and its characteristic liberatory agenda are taken into account.

To begin with, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), the critical text in the postwar intellectual and political revival of feminism, rested upon assumptions strikingly similar to those of *The Lonely Crowd*, *The Organization Man*, and other postwar "guardians of the self." It consistently

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praised concepts of autonomy, independence, liberation, and emancipation, warned against social tyranny, and stressed the demolition of barriers to women's equal economic opportunity and to full and separate human self-realization. Such a line of argument also reflected a longer tradition of American feminist thought, stretching back to Margaret Fuller's stubborn call for self-sufficiency, and to the language and style of the 1848 Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments. It was this line that the postwar women's movement brought so successfully into the political and intellectual environment of that era.

A single-minded emphasis upon equality, however, has never been the whole story with modern feminism. The struggle for political rights often warred with, but never entirely eclipsed, a struggle for distinctiveness, for a respectful recognition of women's dramatically different perspectives and values; and the view of individualism as a gender-specific phenomenon has descended from this latter imperative. Central to that effort is the work of educational psychologist Carol Gilligan. Trained in Eriksonian developmental psychology, Gilligan was struck by the degree to which studies of moral development omitted women from their samples, and omitted a consideration of gender from their theoretical framework and research design. The Eriksonian *Bildungsroman*, built around the passage from infantile dependence to adult autonomy, reflected a conception of adulthood that favored the separateness of the individual self over its connection to others. But women, Gilligan proposed, showed a strikingly different trajectory of moral evolution and a different style of moral judgment, and researchers who habitually treated the male pattern as "normal" needed henceforth to take respectful account of women's difference. For example, she argued, women's perception of self is much more consistently embedded in relationship with others than was the case for autonomy-minded men; hence their moral decisions are made contextually, rather than by reference to an abstract and impersonal standard of justice.

Gilligan's work found broad and immediate public resonance when it first appeared in the late 1970s; and its underlying theme—the effort to connect the feminist movement with the search for meaningful ways of recovering social connectedness in an autonomy-obsessed, individualistic American culture—surely had much to do with that success. Yet her work has also been sharply criticized as nothing more than a postfeminist social-scientific rationalization for a return to Victorian womanhood. Her case says something about the dilemmas facing an movement which strives to offer a model of relatedness that could supplant "male" models of individualism—even as it insists upon its own rightful participation in the very same thrust toward individual empowerment. Feminism finds itself caught between the desire for unrestricted latitude of action and the desire to retain the distinctive assets of women's experience—between an aspiration to secure the kind of personal autonomy that had formerly been the exclusive province of men, and an insistence that women are crucially different from men and that women's heightened sense of mutuality and relationship are the central features of that difference.

The dilemmas of modern feminism, therefore, form a particular case within the more general dilemmas posed by individualism. The task facing writers like Gilligan, Mary Ann Glendon, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and others who have approached the problem in this way is that of reconciling the cultural (and in some cases biological) implications of difference, which they feel committed to uphold, with the politics of equality and individual rights. Each has mapped some element of a route out of individualism; but it is not clear how consequential such initial forays can be unless they can establish the ability of an authoritative political and moral language, other than that of individual rights, to be admitted to the public arena. Fox-Genovese in particular has complained that feminism itself has increasingly become one of the most pernicious expressions of the individualistic ethos in American culture, offering an "atomized" view of society, a "celebration of egotism," and a denial of "the just claims of the community." She would hardly be the only one to feel defeated if feminism accomplished nothing more than to secure women's equal right to be Hipsters. Yet that result seems likely so long as there is no authoritative way left of talking about obligations that transcend the self, and about the prerequisites of moral community.

It is perhaps encouraging, then, that so many in the recent generation of American social thinkers seem preoccupied by questions of community and solidarity, rather than individualism and autonomy. But the ultimate impact of such thinking appears uncertain. It is unlikely that individualism will be effectively challenged merely by an earnest effort to invest more moral energy in the massive social entities within which we move. If anything, the opposite effect seems more likely, at least in the short run. We live in an era in which nations and empires are experiencing, or facing the prospect of, disaggregation, disintegration, dissolution into their constituent elements. This is true not only in Eastern and Central Europe, or Canada: in the United States the devolution of the national community into an infinitude of subcommunities is reflected in the fracturing of American political life into special-interest blocs based upon race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual practice, religion, or ideology. To be sure, there is much that is ominous in such developments; but if considered in light of MacIntyre's and Sandel's observations, such reorientation may also represent the beginnings of an historically inevitable, and perhaps

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not entirely unhealthy, reaction against the pathologies of the unencumbered self and the limitations of a centralized and nationalized social order.

But the negative possibilities that lurk in the disaggregation of nations and empires often seem to outweigh the positive ones, as the murderous conflicts left in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union make painfully clear. The Balkanization of American politics and social life along the lines of highly specific and exclusive identities may represent nothing more than a translation of the energies of radical individualism into group terms—making possible a more effective pursuit of the group's interests within the context of a pluralistic, bureaucratic, and procedural political order, but leaving the public life of the nation impoverished, and perhaps that much further from the possibility of communities capable of sustaining healthy and enlivening differences. The debate over "multiculturalism" that rages in contemporary academe reflects a fear that the satisfactions achieved through the embrace of ethnic tribalism or other particularisms may come at an incalculable price to the common culture, upon whose cohesion all such self-conscious and hyphenate embraces depend. Do the homogeneous American "lifestyle enclaves" explored by Frances FitzGerald in her fascinating study *Cities On a Hill*, running the gamut from the retirement towns of the Sunbelt to the Castro District in San Francisco to the Rajneeshi religious commune in Oregon, represent a recovery of the vibrancy of community life through shared values and shared narratives? Or do they represent a ghastly final adaptation of individualism to the Weberian logic of bureaucratic specialization—a debased form of social association that is merely the unencumbered self writ large? Do they reflect the emptiness of the word "community" in contemporary American parlance, to the point that it has become an all-purpose noun whose sole purpose is to give the appearance of solidity to the adjective that precedes it?

Those questions are difficult to answer, but several observations may at least help sharpen them. First, as FitzGerald's title implies, "lifestyle enclaves" have been a persistent feature of American history, from Massachusetts Bay to Sun City. They perhaps constitute a special case of Tocqueville's more general observation that Americans have a propensity for forming themselves into voluntary associations, which generally combine a functional purpose with a social one, bringing men and women together for the sake of a self-identified, homogeneous community of interest. (Here again, one thinks of the phenomenal rise of the support group.) Such an association need not rely upon an authoritative person or institution to justify itself to its members, thanks to its functional character. In its ideal form, then, a voluntary association offers the prospect of a frictionless association of self and society, conceiving the latter as a receptacle into which the desires of the former may flow freely and be fulfilled, without the coercive hand of human authority intervening.

Yet no problem is more fundamental to American social character, and to the complex of issues here under examination, than the locus of authority; for a large, complex society cannot be governed by the premises of a voluntary association—and even voluntary associations must wrestle, in the end, with problems of authority, as the history of churches and reform movements amply indicates. A social order that is egalitarian, or, more important, that *understands* itself as such, grants little room for what is traditionally understood as authority, unless that authority is depersonalized and embodied in the social entity as such—as in the adage *vox populi vox dei*, or in the triumph of bureaucratic utility over patrimonialism, tradition, and charisma in the modern organization. "When the conditions of men are almost equal," Tocqueville remarked, "they do not easily allow themselves to be persuaded by one another." Equals, that is, do not take orders from one another. Indeed, there is no more characteristic American attitude than disdain for anyone who would arrogate the title of master.

So observed D. H. Lawrence in his idiosyncratic *Studies in Classic American Literature*, one of the enduringly valuable books about American life. America, he taunted, was in thrall to antiauthoritarian fanaticism; it was "a vast republic of escaped slaves," of "masterless" souls who fancy that they can find freedom by "escaping to some wild west" wherein they can evade all constraint. But real freedom came not from such chain-rattling opposition but from inner obedience, from belonging to "a living, organic, *believing* community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized, purpose." People are not free, he asserted, "when they are doing just what they like." Indeed, "if one wants to be free, one has to give up the illusion of doing what one likes, and seek what IT wishes done." Despite Lawrence's idiosyncratic paganism—what, after all, did he mean by IT?—and the fact that he was himself really something of a Hipster, the command is also rich with more venerable Christian overtones: who would save his life must lose it; who would be free must first submit. But submit to what?

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, Christ had taught in the Sermon on the Mount; and it must have seemed that Lawrence was trying to ring his own psychodynamic change upon that imperative. Seek ye the authority not of the conscious ego-self, but of "the IT," the transpersonal "deep self." Yet if the practical meaning of that command seemed obscure and wide open to self-deception, its gravamen, particularly so far as an individualistic ethos was concerned, was not. There is a price for the possibili-

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ty of authentic community, a price levied, so to speak, both up and down the scale of organization—both upon the would-be autonomous self, and upon the consolidated social order within which it presently lives, moves, and has its being. Such communities would prove unfavorable habitats for Hipsters or Organization Men, since those types depend upon a scale of organization that renders the individual both unencumbered and impotent.

But the willingness to surrender a significant portion of oneself to a social whole cannot reliably flow from a vague and uplifting desire for the warmth and supportiveness of "community-building," but will be directly commensurate to the degree of authority invested in that entity; and that very thought tends to strike terror in the hearts of Americans. By investing authority in an obscure "IT"—in preference to, say, a Judeo-Christian God who has revealed Himself with disconcerting and inhibiting definiteness—Lawrence himself was evading moral authority in practice even as he was affirming it in theory. Such is the appeal today of so much New Age spirituality, which often serves merely to bless emotivism and dress it up in flowing robes.

Still, as a critique of American culture, Lawrence's remarks are harder to dismiss. We tend to forget how often we allow the marketplace to function as our model for, or substitute for, moral authority. While such a model opens considerable possibilities, it proscribes others; it is a source of impersonal legitimizing mastery perfectly suited to a society of would-be autonomous, masterless men and women, in much the same sense that Sandel's "procedural republic" can continue to function even in an authoritative vacuum. We should not be deceived, therefore, into thinking that we can combine and shuffle and incorporate the virtues of various social arrangements and "traditions" at will, without having first inevitably refashioned them in the very image of our own present condition.

Every way of life, even a seemingly neutral and eclectic pluralism that tolerantly affirms a wide-open bazaar of ideas and values, has its built-in imperatives, its virtues, its vices, its codes, its taboos, its benefits, and its costs. Whether we wish it or not, we cannot avoid paying the price for our own. And part of that price, it seems, may be a reflexive, unvanquished individualism accompanied by a perpetual yearning for unrealizable forms of community—a dream of being both autonomous and connected that in the end often settles for being neither. Whether that tension is sustainable, or will instead turn out to have been transitional, giving way in due course to other forms of social organization, of course remains to be seen. FT

A Woman of Bethany

What is a woman's hair brushed a hundred strokes
to make a sheen of light to lay across his feet
to the work-scoured hands of her dark-dressed sisters
ladling soup in practical ministration?

Some say my sin was one of luxurious excess,
and, it is true, I never renounced
the savor of perfume wafting superfluous
in rooms where men begged fish and bread.
When the women called me to help serve the feast,
I was still lingering in the market seeking,
not a grocery list of staples,
but some fruitless, perfect course
priced the sum of a life's work.

I bought nard to anoint a body needing food
and an alabaster jar when a clay pot would have served.
The apostles came asking relief of simple wants.
I gave them a tableau of beauty and my tears.
Some say my gift was a scandal, and it is true
it was not much of a meal
for a man.

Elizabeth Creamer

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Lutherans in Sexual Commotion

Leonard R. Klein

By almost every standard for measuring such things the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America stands on the conservative side of mainline Protestantism. It maintains cordial relations and some measure of cooperation with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, which nobody would place in the mainline. Pastors and congregations subscribe formally to the authority of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and that subscription is taken seriously. The creeds and liturgy provide an additional support for the dogmas of the church catholic. A continuing pietism flavors that orthodoxy with a deep concern for personal conduct and devotion. Lutheran identity counts, and that identity for most Lutherans still includes clear doctrinal and ethical content. In 1994 in North America many of these commitments and characterizations are much shakier than they were one or two generations ago, but the best aspects of Lutheran particularism are still identifiable.

Then there are the Lutherans themselves. Overwhelmingly German and Scandinavian, they are properly known for their solidity, hard work, reserve, and, well, conservatism. The civic progressivism of the upper Midwest, where the ELCA is so heavily concentrated, does not contradict this in the slightest. Minnesota, which has many Lutherans and only somewhat fewer Catholics, has been a seat of resistance to state funding for abortion and a leader in strong parental consent legislation. The next largest concentration of ELCA Lutherans (12 percent of about 5.5 million) is to be found in my socially conservative state of Pennsylvania. On the basis of election data and demographics, it can be estimated that 70 percent of ELCA voters went for George Bush in 1988, and this would suggest an even larger vote for Ronald Reagan.

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Lutherans and Lutheranism would not seem to provide very fertile soil for the utopians who have tried to revolutionize sexual ethics in other denominations. In addition to sociology, tradition, and biblical authority there is Luther's teaching on marriage and family life. But utopianism found its way to the ELCA too, in a task force on human sexuality. On Wednesday, October 20, 1993, an AP story about the task force's draft of a social teaching statement, "The Church and Human Sexuality: A Lutheran Perspective," hit the press around the country—even before the pastors had received their copies. Though the story highlighted the most controversial sections of the document, it was accurate and made plain that some ELCA bishops had already expressed serious reservations. Fair as the reporting was, however, it did give rise to some striking headlines. The best of these was, without a doubt, "Lutherans Endorse Masturbation, Condoms, Gay Unions."

A firestorm followed. On the very next day, 20,000 phone calls clogged the lines at church headquarters in Chicago. Callers to local pastors expressed deep worry and concern whether they could remain in the ELCA. Bishops bewailed the possible impact on giving; October is the heart of budget season. My own bishop put an ad in every newspaper in the synod making it clear that the document was only a first draft and dissociating himself from it. Older members of my parish reported their sense that the standards by which they had struggled to live their lives had been betrayed, and parents were less than grateful. In its first five-and-a-half years the ELCA had already been rocked by a series of mainline-style radicalisms, but none had drawn anything like the fire that the task force on human sexuality had brought on the church and on itself.

No one who had been paying attention should have been surprised. Just two years earlier the task force had released a study document that made the group's assumptions and its direction clear, even

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though much of the rhetoric was phrased in the tentative language of discussion. The study, issued in late 1991, relied heavily on the feminist depiction of sexual relationships as expressions of power, and in every way indicated that "committed relationships," rather than the created order of marriage, would frame its discussion of sexuality. The task force determined early to focus on "quality not kind" of relationships. Equally telling was the second sentence of the preface to the 1991 study, which began by announcing that it intended to "stimulate reflection and dialogue with Scripture." With that any genuine Lutheran commitment to the normative character of Scripture vanished and the outcome of the study became predictable.

The task force subsequently made no serious effort to accommodate the heavy criticism that the 1991 study document had drawn, although in the 1993 draft the radical feminist obsession with issues of power is less overt. But where the study, for instance, only hinted at normalization, the draft forges ahead with a strong bias toward full acceptance of gay unions, explicitly ruling out the traditional opposition of the church toward homoerotic behavior.

It would, however, be a serious mistake to focus unduly on the issue of homosexuality, as did the media and many Lutherans in their initial outrage. The gay lobby and the gay members of the task force were forceful and successful in pressing their agenda, but the more fundamental shift in the draft is to be found in the evaluation of relationships on the basis of quality rather than kind. This shift intends far more than the normalization of homosexuality. Relativizing marriage is the driving agenda, and it is feminists, not gays, who are the primary beneficiaries. A certain priority is conceded to marriage, but the norm of heterosexual monogamy is scarcely celebrated. It cannot be, since all sexual arrangements are judged as instances of "committed relationships." The modernist and feminist assertion of personal independence in shaping one's life is the ruling ideology. The biblical assumption that our lives are in fact lived out in structures and orders ordained by God for our good is virtually ignored. Ignored completely is the Lutheran and Augustinian doctrine of the bondage of the will which sees with stark clarity the folly of our claims of free agency. The document is indissolubly wed to the category "committed relationships," which is in fact nothing but a loophole that can only be defined—oxymoronically—by the independent self.

The document does invoke Christian tradition when that suits its purposes, again more feminist and modernist than homosexualist. It opposes prostitution, pornography, sexual abuse, adultery, and the like, though one is hard put to see how adultery can be ruled out if a couple in a committed relationship were to decide that it would be stimulating and meaningful. And it is telling that the section on adultery does not bother to mention the Sixth Commandment.

The draft bears easiest comparison to "Keeping Body and Soul Together," the proposal dumped by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the summer of 1991, just before the ELCA task force released its preliminary study. The Lutheran document is mercifully much briefer than the Presbyterian one and does a better job of concealing its radical feminist assumptions. The Presbyterian report starts and ends blaming everything on the feminist bugbear of patriarchy—that most useful theory of a grand universal conspiracy of all men against all women. The Lutheran draft is not that overt, but you don't have to push too hard to see that the assumptions are the same. What the task force appears not to have learned from the Presbyterians is the unlikelihood of getting away with it.

The other parts made much of by the press, condoms for kids and the commendation of masturbation, are pretty much what one might expect. Although the report does not "condone" teen sexual activity, contraceptives will "reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy" and condomization will do the same for sexually transmitted diseases. The comment on masturbation is gratuitous and seems to reflect somebody's need to address a pet hang-up. What didn't hit the press was that, like the Presbyterian proposal, this one pays minimal attention to procreation—although the few positive sentences on the subject are pretty good. There is, however, not a hint that any question needs to be addressed to married couples who do not see parenting "as part of their calling." Sex and procreation are essentially separated; only the human will remains. Any understanding that sex is teleologically oriented toward the necessary institution of marriage is utterly absent.

The question is, how did this happen? To begin with, while the Lutheranism and the Lutherans described above are genuine enough, the reality is getting shabbier. Though not in the camp of liberal Protestantism, ELCA Lutheranism is so positioned in the American religious scene as to be deeply affected by all the movements, "theologies of," and liberation forces of the past decades. While Lutheranism has been generally more prudent in its social activism than other Protestant churches, the trend has been in the activist direction. And Lutherans sometimes have tried too hard to prove that they are not the immigrant quietists they are rumored to be. In the period prior to the 1988 merger of three predecessor bodies into the new ELCA, homosexual and feminist activism had been growing and pushing with increasing success for recognition of their agendas and "repentance" for past discrimination. Guilty pietists were eager to accommodate, not least among them an aging white male leadership that had never

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recovered its confidence after the earthquakes of the sixties.

Some of the motives were of course good. Church response to human sexuality had often been rigid and priggish. The realization that homosexuality, while still something of a mystery, is not merely the result of choice—as St. Paul of course recognized—does force some reflection. Church people don't want to drive away those who have trouble with classical teaching. They do not wish to punish those who have been unduly shaped by the culture; they want to prevent further harm. They know marriage and courtship customs have been fluid. But dealing with these realities requires sure footing, and many find it easier to bend with the times than to confront a popular cultural shift in spite of its obvious hazards and horrific social results. The very conservatism of traditional Lutheran culture may weaken the resolve of the current generation as it overcompensates for past shortcomings. Finally, a simple desire even by moderates and conservatives not to appear too conservative explains a lot of the motivation behind the document.

There was a structural factor as well. ELCA Lutheranism might be the least theologically liberal component of the mainline, but one feature distinguishes this new church body from its peers and sets it somewhat to the left of them. As a denominational structure, the ELCA is state-of-the-art. It is the newest and most fully embodies the kind of interest group pluralism that characterizes older denominational structures. But where other churches had to slot this pluralism into existing structures, the ELCA made it constitutionally central. "Inclusiveness" was the governing ideology of the group that created the ELCA—tellingly named the Commission for a New Lutheran Church—and as other Protestant bodies and institutions were cautiously backing off from rigid quotas, the ELCA imposed them on every structure within reach. A Commission for Women and a Commission for Multicultural Affairs were set up to watch over pluralist purity, and in keeping with the activist and inclusivist mood of the designers, much of the recruiting for the new staff was done from among a pool of individuals far to the left of most of the clergy and laity. A quota system, rationalized and marketed as a tool both for mission and overcoming past injustice, had from the first another, and deeper, goal: to serve as a Trojan horse for importing the largest possible number of activists into the church bureaucracy. Further, by limiting clergy participation in all boards and commissions to 40 percent it cut back on the number of theologically trained persons who might stand in the way of progress. Finally, by making it necessary that elections be conducted as contests of like against like (female against female, minority against minority, etc.) the system extended vast powers to the nominating process and enabled those in power to recruit just those board members most likely to agree with their purposes and keep them in power.

Structurally, then, the ELCA is designed to give the religious left maximum power in the name of justice, repentance, and inclusiveness and to exclude troublesome voices who know the tradition. Nowhere has this worked better than in the Church in Society bureaucracy and its ally in this enterprise, the Commission for Women.

In the Commission for Church in Society (now after a reshuffling merged with the Division for Social Ministry Organization into the Division for Church in Society) the program worked to perfection. The critical position of Director of Studies went to Pastor Karen Bloomquist, a product of the most radical influences at Union Seminary in New York, and the formation of the ELCA's social statements was to be her responsibility. When it came time to assemble a task force on human sexuality, she bore primary responsibility for assembling it. The bishop chosen for the task force was one of the few known to be sympathetic to reconsidering church teaching on sexuality, and a de facto quota for homosexuals was created and filled.

Throughout this period gay activism was increasing, spearheaded by a group called Lutherans Concerned. Illegal ordinations of three homosexuals in San Francisco soon after the merger evoked much fretting but little actual discipline. Synods began to pass resolutions advocating minor parts of the gay agenda. These were customarily cast in a kind of "motherhood" language that made them very hard for nice people to resist. Committed supporters of change, while not that great in number, became increasingly bold.

At the same time the bishop of the ELCA, Herbert Chilstrom, was overt in his own support for reconsideration of the church's teaching on homosexuality. Early in his tenure he sent a patronizing letter to the clergy urging compassion and understanding in dealing with homosexual persons, as if such a warning were needed. As a private citizen he sent a very public letter to President Clinton supporting his position on gays in the military. For some time he had mused publicly about whether we might not come to see monogamous homosexual relationships in a different light. He cited the ordination of women and more open views on divorce as precedents. These were of course poor precedents, since no clear-headed person had ever argued that women should not be ordained because being a woman was a sin, while many thoughtful people had noticed that the shift toward increasing tolerance of divorce had been at best sloppy and at worst downright unfaithful. Virtually alone in the conference of bishops, the head of the ELCA was visibly identified with the party of change. The person in the best position to stop the process was an advocate. A week after the news hit

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the papers he wrote the clergy a "pastoral letter" in which he blamed the media for the uproar, supported the integrity of the task force, and called for "partnership" and calm. There was no hint in the letter that either the draft itself or the process that had produced it might be the problem.

The firestorm did, however, shake the Chicago leadership severely. Though it is hard to believe, they were astonished and shaken by the extent of the backlash. In the early days much was done to put a bold face on the disaster. Bloomquist and her superior, Pastor Charles Miller, executive director of the Division for Church in Society, immediately wrote a memo to the bishops, which, like Bishop Chilstrom's letter, called for calm and blamed the media. Both documents expressed regret at the timing foul-up that left the pastors of the church with no advance warning when the thing hit the press, but neither of them conceded the possibility of substantive error. As close as they got was to remind the denomination that after all it was only a first draft. The only voice in the national church to admit forthrightly that the product was the problem was the editor of *The Lutheran,* Pastor Edgar Trexler, who in the December issue wrote an editorial calling the distribution of the draft a "disaster" and the draft itself "mortally wounded."

Soon, though, it became clear that the administration was not going to be able to tough it out. It would not do to promise to hear the input of an outraged church when the process had already proven its bad faith. At the suggestion of Charles Miller, Karen Bloomquist stepped aside from further participation in the project, but here again no effort was made to assume blame. Rather, it was asserted that her removal was out of fairness to her, since she had suffered "unjust and abusive personal attacks." Regrettably, she had suffered abusive attacks, even threats, but the implication that responsible criticism of her leadership was unjust distorted the very public record of her ideological commitments.

The church council (the national executive board of the ELCA) took up the issue in early December and even seriously entertained dropping the whole process, although that motion failed by a wide margin. There was a convention mandate for the study, which, however imprudent, could not easily be evaded. The council also elected not to dismiss the task force and start from scratch, and thus missed the opportunity to do the one thing that would both restore confidence and improve the likelihood of a decent result. Instead the council designed an eleven-member consulting panel to help and to oversee the task force. Most of its members would be bishops, parish pastors, and seminary faculty, and thus the panel would be better equipped for the task than the task force it would be overseeing. It quickly came to be referred to as the "watchdog commission." The device, while clumsy, is likely to guarantee that nothing like the task force's first draft will reappear in the ELCA. That will not stop the activists, but for the time being they have been denied the victory they won by being able to call the shots at the beginning and middle of the process.

The foregoing merely chronicles the events that made "The Church and Human Sexuality: A Lutheran Perspective" predictable to anybody who cared to pay attention. The more important question is how magisterial Lutheranism could stumble into such a repudiation of classical Christian teaching on sex and marriage. Bureaucratic misconduct by itself can happen anywhere, but there is more here than that, for the incident is an especially poignant example of the collapse of authority, memory, and tradition in contemporary Protestantism.

It would be appropriate—if not all that illuminating—to round up the usual suspects. The challenge of the Enlightenment continues to destabilize the Church, causing it to doubt the substance and sources of its tradition and tempting it to resort to authoritarian reassertion on the one hand or to accommodation to the prevailing culture and private revelation on the other. The Church is sociologically the kind of "soft" institution where, notwithstanding formal adherence to authorities like Scripture, the easier contemporary route of accommodation is frequently chosen. These are tough times for the Church, and in such fairness to the task force as can honestly be mustered, we should grant that major blunders can be expected. Blunders have loomed large in modern church history. In this sense the ELCA task force on sexuality is only a footnote to a much larger story.

The culture of denominationalism also plays a role. Increasingly, denominations are loose coalitions, but the one thing they do best, as sociologist Nancy Ammerman has observed, is to behave like denominations. They provide certain services to parishes, or try to. They negotiate with each other. They aspire to publicly represent their tradition. They maintain pension and health programs. They merge. They take cues from each other. And they try to comment officially on hot issues in the culture. On sexuality, for instance, advocates of the task force's work announced that the issue won't go away. Most of us may be relieved to learn that, though the reality of sex does not in itself supply any reason to suspect that a denomination might capably address it. But denominations believe in their enterprises, and people who go to conventions want to believe too. So when some synods asked for help on the question of sexuality, the denomination complied.

Another reason for the specific shape of this misfortune is the commitment of the ELCA and most other Protestant denominations to representation as

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the best way to seek theological and ethical truth. This is rather different from the quota system, though related to it. Simply put, the assumption is that the best route to the truth is to assemble a wide variety of persons who have some personal involvement with aspects of a particular issue, hold hearings and meetings, write papers, and then vote in committee and convention on what the Christian position ought to be. It is not exactly a democratic ideology—that would require churchwide voting or at least the polling of congregations. It is rather a kind of elitism common in bureaucratic institutions: get the experts together. On the other hand, it masks an anti-elitism: keep the clergy and theologians at a distance. That is largely what the ELCA task force did.

This representative methodology empowers a new elite, made up not so much of the individual experts who constitute the committees and task forces—and surely not the theological elites and ordained leaders of the church who should be leading such discussions—but the bureaucratic inner circle who shape the committees, lead the process, pull along the reluctant, and, more often than not, draft the final documents. The "dysfunctional politeness" of church culture empowers the most aggressive, and virtually no one says so until things have gone too far, especially if someone who claims to have suffered pain is pressing the issue.

Yet without reference to theological causes, historical and sociological observations still leave unanswered the question, "Why did this happen?" Two initial moves mentioned earlier cast the die. The first was a paper presented at the task force's first meeting advocating that sexual relationships be evaluated on the basis of "quality not kind." The second was that Scripture became a dialogue partner rather than rule and norm. That low view of Scripture reduced it to a sourcebook for the enlightened. From these two commitments the rest quickly follows.

But even identifying these two very consequent decisions does not explain how in Lutheranism, of all places, the authority of Scripture could be so undermined and why in Lutheranism, with its strong theology of God's orders of creation and preservation, anyone could hope to get away with proposing that sexual arrangements be judged on quality not kind. A prior decay of theological coherence must first have set in for such options to present themselves and then prevail. And indeed it had.

The Lutheran and Calvinist Reformations have been called "magisterial" by historians for their coherence and their intellectual and theological seriousness. Unlike the radical reformers, the Lutherans, and to a lesser degree the Calvinists, saw themselves in continuity with the great tradition of Western Catholicism—its teachers, its creeds, and its dogmatic decisions. In Lutheranism the retention of the ancient liturgy, sacramentalism, iconography, and much of the music and ceremony of the medieval church made—and makes—it apparent that the Lutheran Reformation did not start a new church but continued the ancient teaching and life of the catholic community.

With time, though, that has become less true. The Protestant communions increasingly act like new churches, uprooted from the catholic tradition and the biblical narrative. More and more, Protestantism seems unable to say why it claims what it claims or to cite compelling grounds for the positions it takes. Forgetful of its catholic roots and ambivalent about the authority of Scripture, Reformation Christianity has begun to look more and more like an empty Protestant principle, a mere negation of hierarchy and tradition with no positive content of its own.

Earlier in their histories a polemical, but still genuine, conversation with Roman Catholicism helped maintain the magisterial integrity of the major Reformation traditions. A shared world and worldview bound them together on many ethical and dogmatic questions that now increasingly separate Protestant and Catholic thinking—the ecumenical movement notwithstanding and not much helping. Polemically, Reformation theology grounded its teaching on Scripture alone, rather than on Scripture and tradition, the polemical pole represented by the Roman and Greek churches. But in truth the Reformation's *sola scriptura* principle was always nestled in the catholic tradition and came to expression in the uninterrupted affirmation of ancient dogma and a long coherent tradition of ethical interpretation. The canon had been determined by bishops and rabbis and received from the ancient church without question by the Reformers, just as they continued to receive the dogmatic decisions of the ancient councils.

Centuries of separation and polemics have led Protestantism in some quarters to imagine that the biblical witness could be disentangled from the Church's history, tradition, and teaching office. Under the assault of critical scholarship, Protestantism tended then to make one of two bad choices: either to reaffirm Scripture's authority by ignoring the critics or to accept the criticism and in some degree to abandon the Scripture principle. One part of Protestantism fragmented and hardened into a series of contradictory biblicistic positions; the other continued to meander beyond the limits of Scripture and tradition and, uncontrolled by any legitimately established teaching authority, to become a dogmatic and ethical free-for-all.

Bishop Chilstrom's post-firestorm letter to the pastors of the ELCA perfectly exemplifies the collapse of teaching authority in modern Protestantism. After assuring his colleagues that the document was only a first draft, he reminded them that it would still have to pass in convention. Those points were fair enough, but then came the clincher: even when a doc-

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ument does pass, he noted, it cannot bind anyone's conscience. Which is to say that this typically Protestant church has no way of saying "Thus says the Lord" and that its representative deliberations are therefore nothing more than an assessment of opinion with no binding authority whatever. The obvious question, then, is, "Why bother?" The obvious answer is that votes on controverted issues serve to advance the interests of parties powerful enough to push for them.

That Protestant teaching thus degenerates into a mere power struggle is depressing enough; that it seems in the process to have lost its basis for believing, teaching, or confessing anything is far worse. Freedom of conscience and freedom conscientiously to take exception to church decisions are not to be scoffed at, and Luther was not the only practitioner. But conscientious protest has meaning only insofar as the Church seriously endeavors to teach, not in the name of its of its own pseudo-democratic consensus, but in the name of God. It is, however, just this that the mainline Protestant churches can no longer do, and their efforts to teach collapse into turf battles to see who can grab the helm to advance their own causes. Thus the Protestant principle of conscientious freedom has metamorphosed into the modern assertiveness of the individual and the party.

Aspects of the problem date back to the Reformation itself. In that emergency situation much was taken for granted about the continuity and substance of the Christian Church. The mutually recognized authority of Scripture served well in the debates with the papacy, but the Reformers and their successors never did a terribly good job of saying why they received what they received from the ancient church. When modernity finally put the question, most Protestants proved unable to give a compelling answer, took refuge in moralism and religious subjectivism, and waited.

To be sure, orthodox Protestantism continued to flourish, but the termites chewed on and a theology independent of Scripture, tradition, and magisterial authority flourished. Efforts at post-Liberal reconstruction have, of course, long been under way. Barth's initial moves were salutary, but he was too Protestant to face the question of why he dared reassert the authority of Scripture. Other contemporary theologians in the non-Roman West are working very hard to reinvigorate Protestant ecclesiology and to put Scripture, Church, and the teaching office back together, to reconstruct, non-polemically, the earlier dialogue with the continuing catholic community. A good deal of the theology is excellent; its prospects for success are another matter. Much of American Protestantism is, astonishingly, still pre-Barthian. Lutheranism, in the past never liberal enough to fit such a designation, is in these latter days finding a way.

In mid-century it seemed that Lutheranism might be able to avoid the unsatisfactory choice between fundamentalism and liberalism. Lutheran theological reconstruction has, however, turned out to be part of the problem that makes possible something like "The Church and Human Sexuality: A Lutheran Perspective." In keeping with Luther's Christocentric orientation, much of modern Lutheran theology sought to find and proclaim the Gospel as a free and freeing Word, precisely apart from biblical text and ecclesiastical context. Reacting to the biblicism and narrow dogmatism of old Lutheranism, a variety of neo-Lutheran movements in the twentieth century sought to free the liberating Word of a gracious God from the constrictions of a dogmatic, rationalistic, proof-texting theology. The effort was worthy in its own right and in some measure provided a way to use modern biblical criticism without falling into liberalism.

But as the twentieth century approaches its blessed terminus, it has become apparent that this Word-centered, Gospel-centered theology has not succeeded in evading the modern Protestant predicament. It has not been able to say well enough what the Gospel is and by what authority the Church dares to proclaim it. Neo-Lutheranism has been vulnerable to the reduction of the Christian faith to experience. Indeed the kind of Protestantism that fades into abstraction owes much to Lutheranism for its peculiar tendency to reduce the whole of the Christian faith to the doctrine of justification. When this reduction takes place, theology becomes essentially a set of negations. First, and fundamental, is the doctrine of justification by faith alone: we are not saved by our works. But much more is often thought to follow. If that negation of human works (and by implication of all human structure and conduct) is what Christianity is, then morality, tradition, authority, the Church, sanctification, discipleship, liturgical order, and even dogma are secondary at best. In some minds they are actually anti-Gospel.

From this Lutheran reductionism all sorts of conclusions can be, and frequently are, drawn. Since salvation is about liberation from Law and structure, binding decisions about truth and conduct are virtually impossible. This has led some Lutheran theologians to the conclusion that Christian morality can be little more than a vague *Interimsethik* (open-ended decision-making between Pentecost and the last judgment). Some Lutheran thinkers have been more than ready to say that all we can do is to muddle through. In this understanding there is no use for God's Law as a guide to Christian conduct. There are no ethical absolutes for us in the Law or in the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and there is no natural law, at least not one about which any reliable conclusions can be drawn. Sanctification (holiness of life) must be utterly distinguished from justification (God's decree that we are holy in spite of our sin) and

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is to all intents and purposes irrelevant.

In this apophatic Lutheranism, then, justification tends to become mere liberation from some bondage or other. Where sin, death, and the devil are no longer the bondage in question and where fear of God's judgment has been diluted or dissipated into political correctness, then justification becomes liberation from anything that anyone *experiences* as bondage. Whatever liberates may even take the grammatical place of God in theological sentences. From this kind of Lutheranism it is no step at all to the claims of the task force on sexuality.

I would hasten to add that this, while widespread and only slightly caricatured, is very bad Lutheranism. Indeed, most of these neo-Lutheran negations (save the first one, that we are not saved by our works) negate Luther and other early orthodox Lutherans. They were not, in the modern sense, Protestants; they were not reductionists. They sought no Protestant principle at the center of the onion. Conscience did not reign supreme and reign alone. It was, as Luther said at the Diet of Worms, "captive to the Word of God." At that Rubicon of Protestantism, there was no modern Protestant in the room. Luther and company were medieval catholics on a mission to reform.

And the Word of God itself did not exist in isolation. Luther plainly asserted the natural law, as did the Aristotelian thinkers of high Lutheran Orthodoxy; he even defended the truth of the Ten Commandments on the basis of natural law. Early Lutheranism never let its critical theological distinction between justification and sanctification moot the question of ethics, as a cursory reading even of the hymnody would reveal. For the Reformers the Church was real and visible, a nurturing mother to every Christian. It was a real Body of Christ, even though a mixed Body of saints and sinners, and according to Article VII of the Augsburg Confession it will endure forever. It has legitimate bearers of authority. In Reformation theology justification is not a mere negation of human works but is itself utterly dependent on the classical dogmas of the Trinity and the incarnation—for it is *per Christum*. Luther said that if you take away the dogmatic assertions, you take away the Gospel. And while the Bible's authority arises from its being in Luther's splendid term "the cradle in which Christ lies," it is not thereby restricted.

Modern Lutheranism has forgotten much of all this in executing its initially promising end run around the Enlightenment. The pattern is familiar enough. Building on the emphasis on the individual in pietism, moving through Kant, and in this century appropriating existentialism, Lutheranism has too frequently tried to construct in the private experience of justification an area for faith that cannot be touched by the challenges of modernity. But inasmuch as postmodernity has become precisely the flight from foundationalist certainties about truth and morals in the wake of its own assertions of relativity and liberation, Christianity so interpreted simply collapses into modernity. Personal commitment, personal choice, faith as pure subjectivity, social liberations advanced by organized groups of self-designated victims—these become the substance, or rather non-substance, of the Christian faith. Sadly, then, the products of Lutheran, Presbyterian, and other commissions on sexuality are not only predictable, they are inevitable, symptomatic of the collapse of Protestantism into subjectivism. Lutheran theology's antinomian tendency makes it perhaps more vulnerable than the other Reformation traditions in spite of the countervailing forces of its sociology and its doctrinal tradition, although here and there an older methodology, which understands that the Gospel does not negate the commandments, lives side by side with neo-Lutheranism and makes possible at least a tentative no to the likes of the task force.

Anyone who reads these last paragraphs as a commendation of *Veritatis Splendor* would be correct. Luther would recognize the arguments of the Pope; he would be scandalized by the task force. For classical Lutheranism there is a clear structure of reality and morality accessible to natural reason and illumined by revelation, as the Pope claims. For classical Lutheranism the commandments still apply. For classical Lutheranism we live our lives within the God-given and liberating limits of wholesome structures. Within them we serve God and our neighbor. For classical Lutheranism, truth is determined not representatively but magisterially—in Scripture and Creed, in patristic testimony, and under the guidance of the theologically trained and ordained.

So we can in the end blame the Enlightenment, I suppose, but that would be a cheap excuse. It is Protestantism's feeble response to the Enlightenment that has brought us to this pass, and things are not getting any better.

But what then should Lutherans—and the rest of post-Reformation Christianity with them—do about sexuality? A period of silence might be in order, and with it, a recognition of the silliness and irrelevance of the argument that the issues raised by the ELCA document on sexuality won't go away. A faithful church will find that it already has enormous resources, most obviously in a deep tradition of teaching on sexual ethics that already exists. An honest denomination would show decent respect for its pastors and people and realize that they are already doing something about sexuality—in trying to live as Christians, in celebrating marriage, in teaching and preaching, in compassion and example, in pastoral sensitivity to those who fall outside the norms, in refusing to rush to judgment, and in medi-

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ating the forgiveness of sins. A lower-key approach might avoid the very elevation of sexual issues above other ethical matters that the liberated say they want to avoid.

Responsible denominations could heed the Hippocratic injunction, "First, do no harm." They would realize that by these sorties they harm not just their own already shaky credibility but also the people who will be shocked, feel betrayed, and respond with fury. They will also harm those whom they intend to help. Young people are not assisted when the church gives them the same advice they could get from Planned Parenthood. Cohabitors need from the church a push to the altar not to some ephemeral subjective commitment. Singles enjoying the fruits of the sexual revolution need some old-fashioned warnings for their spiritual, psychological, and physical good. Married people and parents, almost all of them by now survivors of the sexual revolution, weren't asking for the task force's kind of help, and homosexuals will not be assisted by the church's lying about Scripture. The relevant issue here is not the few places in Scripture where homosexuality is mentioned, and efforts to explain away Romans 1 and its deeply rabbinic connection of homosexuality with idolatry inevitably fail in any case. The relevant loci are the creation story, the Sixth Commandment, Ephesians 5 with its meditation on marriage as a sacramental sign of the union of Christ and his Church, the end of Revelation with its depiction of the marriage of the Lamb, and the whole narrative stream of Holy Scripture that assumes the heterosexual monogamous norm, despite the fact of royal and patriarchal polygamy. The Church is the last place that should be separating sex from marriage.

Most of all, the churches need to realize that they are the body of Christ, his sacramental sign in the world, and that this sign is not exercised by a bland niceness spiced with politically correct prophecy. It is a sign to be exercised by hard faithfulness, by the proclamation of real grace to real sinners, not the redefinition of sin or any other humanly concocted good work. That's what the Reformation was supposed to have been about. A church that is clear-headed about issues of sexuality will realize that it is not the great social fixer—it is both too unimportant sociologically and too important eschatologically for such false servanthood. The call of the Spirit is a call to discipleship, and the Church simply lies if it obscures the high price of that call. Does this mean that, for instance, some homosexual Christians will stumble or hurt or at times dissemble? Of course. So do we all. We are at one and the same time saints and sinners—that too was a major point of the Reformation. Misguided pastoral care that improperly defined good works and softened the condemnation of the Law was exactly what Luther attacked. A church that does not see itself as a coalition of interest groups but that finds its unity in the faith will be able to provide the quiet and confidential pastoral care and casuistic adaptation of norms that have always been the case. The church politicized can only sell indulgences by pretending to lower the norms.

In Luther's terms what we have, then, in the proposals of the ELCA task force on sexuality and its several counterparts in other communions is a theology of glory, a utopian belief that the Church can dole out full liberation now. But a true theologian, said Luther, is a theologian of the cross. We can bear the cross together with those for whom Christian sexual ethics are hard, but we cannot take it from them. The task force, to its credit, sought to relieve very real pain, but the tools it used—enlightenment personalism, liberationist feminism, reductionist Lutheranism, and great quantities of naiveté and sentimentalism—are not up to the job. Only God finally can dissolve the ambiguities and pains of human sexuality. What the Church should be doing is to engage the modern spirit in a vigorous debate precisely where it elevates raw experience and the unformed conscience above both reason and revelation. But such an undertaking was beyond the competence—and the wildest imaginings—of the ELCA task force and its all too numerous advocates and counterparts. FT

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Abortion Facts and Feelings II
An Exchange

James Q. Wilson

In his critique of my essay on abortion ("Abortion Facts and Feelings," April), Hadley Arkes takes me to task, not for my specific proposals, but for my basing these proposals on sentiments rather than principles. Indeed, he seems to regard my suggestion that a pregnant woman contemplating an abortion be required to examine photographs of the fetus corresponding to the estimated age of her fetus as a practical step forward over his proposal that, first, every woman contemplating an abortion be given a pregnancy test and, second, every fetus aborted alive be sustained in that life.

The issue that divides us, then, is not what initial steps one might take to modify the lamentably rights-based language of *Roe v. Wade*, but the ground for taking those steps. He prefers his much more modest proposals because, unlike me, he is motivated by a commitment to a clear principle. As a result of that commitment, he is prepared to move "in a train of moderate steps" until policy reaches that point where an absolute prohibition on all abortions, beginning at the moment of conception, is in place. I, lacking a "principle" (or perhaps any principles), have no grounds for moving to such an absolute prohibition.

I have two responses to his criticism. First, if he has a principle, he is obliged to state and defend it and show on what grounds it rests. I read his essay carefully, but all I learned is that I lack some principle that he seems to possess but has so far not chosen to reveal. He cannot get that principle from his Jewish religion, since no clear principle barring all abortions under all circumstances can be found in the Old Testament or in the commentaries of most of the rabbinic scholars who have construed that text. He might get it from papal pronouncements, but he would have to acknowledge that these pronouncements going back over several centuries neither rest on a secure scriptural foundation nor are always consistent. There are secular philosophers who have attempted to derive a principled grounding for an absolute ban on abortion, but they are contradicted by other philosophers. Given these facts, I want to know what principle Professor Arkes has found and how he would defend it against the criticisms that he can readily imagine and that others have made.

I do not respond in this way because I am interested in scoring debater's points. I thought long and hard about this matter before I wrote my essay. I searched the writings of the great thinkers for guidance on the issue. I found little. My reliance on natural moral sentiments is not, as I think Professor Arkes knows, an effort to find in public opinion the basis for an accommodation between pro-abortion and anti-abortion advocates. (I found the attempts by others, such as Roger Rosenblatt, Ronald Dworkin, and Laurence Tribe, to design such a reconciliation to be wholly unpersuasive.) I very much doubt that any rapprochement is possible.

And were an accommodation possible it would have to be based on something more secure than public opinion, if by "opinion" we mean merely an inclination or impression that happens to be widely but perhaps transiently held—for example, a taste for frozen yogurt. In lampooning my reference to sentiments, Professor Arkes confuses a moral sentiment with a passing fancy. His mental experiment would be better stated this way: If it could be shown that 95 percent of the people in some country loved their children, should the care of those children be compulsory? The answer would surely be yes. But if 95 percent of the people in that country decided that they enjoyed watching babies being killed, should all babies be killed? The answer would surely be no. The difference between the two cases is that we can easily conceive of humans having the first preference, but it is inconceivable that they should have the second. No

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such society as the second could ever exist. To *be* human is to cherish one's young, among other things. By contrast, we can easily imagine people liking or not liking frozen yogurt.

This leads to my second response. Moral sentiments, as I understand them, are neither "pre-rational and pre-articulate" (whatever those phrases may mean) nor mere preferences, such as a liking for frozen yogurt. When one gazes at one's own sleeping child, one does not compare her to different flavors of yogurt, or indeed to anything at all. She is incomparable; desirable beyond limit; the embodiment of beauty, sweetness, and innocence to an inexpressible degree. These sentiments are as natural and as profound as any of which the human breast is capable. Those same feelings are not elicited to nearly the same degree by the sight of a sperm, an egg, or even a zygote. Nonetheless, many women feel so passionately about their pregnancy—which is to say, about *their* zygotes, even in the first few weeks of their existence—as to reveal by this deep emotion the inclination that nature has imparted in mankind to cherish and nurture the next generation. My proposal was meant to harness those commanding and imperial sentiments to making a decision that so few people make, or can be made to make, on grounds of abstract principle. Those sentiments are the very foundation of moral life, even though they not capable of resolving all of life's moral dilemmas.

In particular, they do not resolve the conflict between two powerful sentiments: a wish to preserve human life from its first moments of existence and a desire not willingly to impose upon a child a short life of pain and misery. The latter sentiment will be aroused, and placed in conflict with the former, when the parents know that an embryo is tragically and hopelessly deformed. I can imagine no greater anguish than making a choice defined by those two sentiments; I am in awe of the many parents that have made it on behalf of life, even knowing the consequences. Our most profound moral sentiments, like most moral principles, are often in conflict. It would be splendid if there were a single, sovereign sentiment—or principle—by which such conflicts can be resolved, but there is not: not even Immanuel Kant could supply one, and I think Professor Arkes knows this.

That mankind has not been placed under the direction of an unfailingly reliable and wholly conclusive moral guide is our unhappy lot; indeed, being subject to conflicting sentiments (or principles) is what it means to be human.

I believe that such sentiments, though they are sometimes in conflict, are the grounds on which, ultimately, we defend our fundamental principles. They strike the great majority of people as more compelling grounds than those of abstract reason, even (or especially) ones advanced by Kant. I have explained in *The Moral Sense* why I believe this (though apparently not to the satisfaction of the reviewer in this magazine). Whether or not he finds my explanation persuasive, I think Professor Arkes is wrong to compare such sentiments to, as he puts it, a "feeling," "perceptions," or the "vagaries of opinions."

If there is a principle that is a surer guide than sentiment to action in this case, abortion, I await Professor Arkes' account of it. He comes close to stating it with his compelling example of how weak the moral sentiments are when confronted by slavery. He asks whether sentiment—or as he would put it, wrongly, "opinion"—might not tolerate slavery? Indeed it can, and has, and still does. In fact matters are much worse than his example suggests, for he refers only to *race* slavery. But slavery itself long predates race slavery: the very Greeks and Romans whom I suspect both Professor Arkes and I admire owned slaves and defended slavery, even when the slaves were people of their own race. (Aristotle comes to mind.) Slavery was practiced by Jews in ancient Israel and by Christians in many lands. The Bible in various passages urges us to treat slaves humanely, but nowhere does it oblige us to set them free.

The moral sentiments often fail to reach much beyond the family or village. But God's law, as set down in the Old Testament, and Athenian philosophy, as set down by the great teachers, often failed to reach much beyond the family, the polis, and the tribe. It required the heroic efforts of a few people, chiefly in England and America, to compel us to see slaves *as human*; to look them in the eye and to see, so to speak, our own reflection there.

The effect of that teaching, once we accepted it, was to expand the reach of the moral sentiments by expanding the definition of who is truly human. We cannot turn back; we have seen ourselves in the faces of others. As Lincoln put it, we now know that there is no argument that can justify enslaving blacks (or any "others") that cannot also justify enslaving us. The Fourteenth Amendment accepts that argument and endows it with constitutional protection giving new meaning to the phrase that "all men are created equal."

This enlargement of the sphere to which our moral sentiments are to apply was, perhaps, the most profound achievement of the Enlightenment. That expansion was justified by certain principles that, though they have been available to us at least since the time of the Stoics, acquired persuasive power only in the last two hundred years, and then only for a small fraction of the earth's population. The equal claim of all people to respect and dignity has yet to penetrate Bosnia, or Somalia, or Iraq, or countless other places. I wonder whether it ever will.

But whether it does or not, I doubt that we here, now, can settle or even discuss our differences over

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abortion by making comparisons between a woman's own fetus and an enslaved stranger. Many people now regard a fertilized egg as sacred life, entitled to all the protection we can afford it. I have no quarrel with them. Other people regard an embryo in the early weeks of pregnancy as not deserving of unqualified protection because, before we feel it to be human, we feel an obligation to spare the human-that-is-to-be unnecessary pain. I have no quarrel with them. My quarrel is with those women who, knowing that they carry within them life by anyone's definition, refuse to confront that fact, insist on pulling the veil of self-regarding ignorance over what they bear, and abort because they are endowed with rights that trump all other rights and interests.

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Hadley Arkes

I could print portions of James Wilson's response and willingly have them dropped, in leaflets, over Manhattan. As I said in my own piece, people of my persuasion would do handstands if we could enact Wilson's policy today and have the law restrict abortions beyond eight to ten weeks. That the proposal will be rejected summarily by the partisans of abortion goes without saying. But it is worth saying that these same people may affably accept all of Wilson's premises as they proceed to vote down his plan. My concern was that Wilson could not establish the moral ground of his position; that he ran the risk then of fostering confusion among his own allies about the ground of their opposition to abortion; and that the allies who made themselves suggestible to his arguments were risking a serious erosion in the conviction that they summoned to this issue.

For some reason, this estimable man, whose writings have nourished me, seems persistently to miss the point, and to contest me on issues that do not divide us. If he scans my article again, he will not find any place in which I declared for an "absolute prohibition" on abortion. That is language—and a position—that he is pleased to attribute to me, without warrant. I did make the point that life begins at conception, and that there is no ground of principle on which the embryo or fetus could be regarded as anything less than human at any stage of its existence. But from this point, it does not necessarily follow that I would have the law try to protect the embryo at every moment, or seek an "absolute prohibition" on abortion. I do not seek that kind of perfection in politics, and the laws on abortion, before *Roe v. Wade,* did not seek it either. I was tutored by the same teachers in Chicago who taught James Wilson about Aristotle and Aquinas, and I thought he would be far more cautious before attributing to me such an extravagant leap beyond prudence.

But he cannot seem to decide whether he wishes to indict me for being rigid and overly principled, or far too accommodating. And so he fastens on my examples of "moderate" positions and glides past the point: namely, that even measures far more modest than his can plant principles, or teachings, far more critical than anything his own, more ambitious plan, would impart. The example of the yogurt was not meant to lampoon. But I fear that Wilson is inclined to treat it as a lampoon for the sake of avoiding the argument it was bearing. The example was meant to bring out even more sharply Immanuel Kant's point that a unanimity of feeling simply cannot supply the ground of a moral judgment. Wilson bristles at the example—and yet it appears that he still hasn't taken hold of the point: the fact that 95 percent of the people in the country "loved their children" would still not establish why the law is justified in protecting those children at the hands of those parents. And it would fail to establish that point for the same reason that the law would not be justified in receding from the protection of the children even if those feelings changed overnight and 95 percent of the public now "despised their children." That, you might say, was Kant's point.

Wilson himself records a telling distinction: A consensus in favor of protecting children may be honored, but a consensus in favor of killing them need not be. That may suggest to some of us that there is—pardon the expression—a principle here, or a standard of judgment, that allows us to consider just which type of consensus we can honor. The critical test, evidently, is not in the consensus of opinion, or the concentration of feeling. And yet Wilson steps away from a moral judgment even here: He tells us merely that the second choice will not be chosen because it is "inconceivable," that no society of this kind, which destroys its young, "could ever exist." But as a matter of logic, infanticide is quite conceivable, and empirically it so happens that infanticide continues to be an intractable part of the human record. That no society could subsist if it killed all of its young may be a neat, tautological point. But a society may persist even while a sizable segment continues to destroy its offspring. For those of us who think that the lives destroyed in abortion are human lives, that seems to be exactly the state of things right now. For the problem of infanticide, we usually have the laws on homicide. And yet, those laws cannot derive simply from the empirical report that "most people out there prefer not to kill their own young." That empirical report in itself would not establish why the killing of the young would be wrong, even for people who do not join the preference for protecting the young.

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Wilson says that he "awaits" my account of the principle that would establish the wrong of abortion, for he has "read [Arkes'] essay carefully" without finding it there. He would seem to suggest in these curious passages that I have not written anything on the subject apart from this essay. I cannot blame him if I have read more of his books than he has of mine, and it might have escaped his notice that I have written on this matter at length—in my book, *First Things* (Princeton, 1986, Chapters XVI-XVII), and in numerous articles before and since, including a monthly column in a magazine in which he has stood now, for some time, as a member of the Publication Committee. I did not think this was the occasion to offer my extended argument again, but even the readers of this one article might have seen enough to know the main lines of that argument: After conception, the embryo does not become more "human" as it advances in age; the being in the womb is nothing less than human at any stage. And that means that its life may be taken only for reasons that stand on the same plane as the reasons we would be obliged to give for taking any other human life. As I reported, most respondents in our surveys do not think that people lose the claim to live when they are blind or disabled, and so they do not think these infirmities justify an abortion at any stage of a pregnancy. I don't think Wilson would suggest that we need less compelling reasons for taking the life of a child eight months in the womb, than a child eight months out of the womb. There are plenty of things to argue about in hard cases, but what is the main mystery about?

Wilson is correct that it truly was an achievement to bring ourselves to the point at which black people were seen as human beings. But as I argued, that accomplishment came precisely because people like Lincoln insisted on testing, with the most stringent, principled reasoning, the claims of many literate people that this dark creature simply didn't look like "one of us." As Roger Wertheimer once put it, the black slave looked to the white master like "some sort of demiperson, a blathering beast of burden." As Lincoln showed, the person who tested that claim severely, with the force of principle, did not fall into abstraction. I would suggest earnestly to my long-time ally that there may be a serious lapse into the most grievous abstraction when a writer uses the term "deformed" to cover anything ranging from spina bifida to Down's syndrome to Tay Sachs disease—and with that convenient abstraction cover all of them with a ready license for abortion. The same tendency may be at work in the willingness to accept abortion for the sake of avoiding "unnecessary pain," when that term may cover the pain of Tay Sachs and the pain of being "unwanted." Even people who claim to be emancipated from the tyranny of principles are not immune to the tyrannies of abstraction.

But that said, as I hope it may be said by an admirer of long standing, I can only record my satisfaction in seeing the pen of James Wilson drawn to this issue. As Paul Henreid says to Humphrey Bogart at the end of *Casablanca,* "Welcome to the cause." This time, I'm sure we'll win.

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(Psalm 63)

I wanted to see God more than I wanted
Water in the desert, more than power
Over others, so I watched the night sky
Drinking deep cold milky spray.
Next day I stretched out on the couch
Remembering the nightwatch:
"Distances inside me go
Deeper than a planet's shadow
On the outer rings. Catch hold."
But set my enemies beneath
Your notice, feed them to the dogs
That howl all night, hungry, outside
City walls. Let me sing more.
Stop the liars' mouths with dirt.

Laurance Wieder

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Review Essay

The Corrected Jesus

Richard B. Hays

THE FIVE GOSPELS: THE SEARCH FOR THE AUTHENTIC WORDS OF JESUS. Edited by ROBERT W. FUNK, ROY W. HOOVER, and THE JESUS SEMINAR. *Macmillan. 576 pp. $30.*

The message left on my answering machine by my brother-in-law, an attorney, sounded a tone of skeptical cross-examination: "I heard on my car radio today an interview with a New Testament scholar named Robert Funk. He's publishing a new version of the gospels that claims to distinguish what Jesus *really* said from what the gospel writers reported. Funk says it's based on the work of a group of leading Bible scholars. Are you involved in this? How can they claim to know what Jesus really said or didn't say? I have enough trouble proving in a court of law what somebody said six months ago! Should I take this book seriously?"

I

Indeed, a new book called *The Five Gospels*—the fruit of the labors of the much-publicized "Jesus Seminar"—claims to provide definitive new answers to the question, "What did Jesus really say?" A panel of New Testament scholars, meeting over a period of several years, has given us a new red-letter edition of the four canonical gospels plus the Gospel of Thomas, with the words adjudged by a poll of these scholars actually to have been spoken by Jesus printed in red type. Other colors reflect their shadings of judgment about the historical reliability of the other sayings attributed to Jesus: pink for possibly authentic, gray for probably inauthentic, and black for certainly inauthentic. The introduction to the book suggests breezily that an "unofficial but helpful interpretation of the colors" would be as follows:

> Red: That's Jesus!
> Pink: Sure sounds like Jesus.
> Gray: Well, maybe.
> Black: There's been some mistake.

The results are offered up in a fresh translation—dubbed the "Scholars Version"—that seeks to "produce in the American reader an experience comparable to that of the first readers" by approximating "the common street language of the original."

The grandiose dedication page of *The Five Gospels* invokes the names of three historic figures who hover as presiding genii over this ambitious work:

> *This report is dedicated to*
> GALILEO GALILEI
> *who altered our view of the heavens forever*
> THOMAS JEFFERSON
> *who took scissors and paste to the gospels*
> DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS
> *who pioneered the quest of the historical Jesus*

Unnamed, however, is the one figure who might most appropriately symbolize the public face of this project: P. T. Barnum. The co-chairmen of the Jesus Seminar, Robert Funk and John Dominic Crossan, have demonstrated an ingenuity for promotion that would surely have warmed the heart of that master American showman.

For the past seven years, the popular press has from time to time published eye-catching progress reports on the work of the Jesus Seminar under headlines such as "Most of Jesus' words ghostwritten," "Jesus probably didn't recite Lord's Prayer, scholars say," "Is the Bible the gospel truth?" and "Scholars compiling new Bible." And much humorous controversy has surrounded the Seminar's practice of voting on the authenticity of individual Jesus-sayings by casting colored balls into a box. The publication of *The Five Gospels* was heralded by a feature story on National Public Radio (the broadcast heard by my brother-in-law), and the charismatic Crossan has broken through to a mass audience by appearing on "The Larry King Show." Such publicity has been actively courted by members of the Seminar, who have from the beginning of their work explicitly aimed to disseminate their results as widely as possible in the public media.

Of course, the knack for attracting popular attention is not necessarily to be despised. If indeed there were significant new findings, broadly accepted by leading New Testament scholars, concerning the historical facts about what Jesus taught, such findings would indeed be newsworthy. The basic questions to be asked about this project, therefore, concern not the Seminar's voting procedures or means of communicating its findings but rather the substance of its claims. What methods have been used to produce the results here proffered? What image of the historical Jesus emerges from these multicolored pages? (Actually, the pages are mostly black: more on this below.) To what extent are these methods and results gen-

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uinely representative of informed scholarly consensus? For reasons that I shall summarize briefly here, I must conclude that the operative methodology of the Seminar is seriously flawed, that it therefore inevitably produces a skewed portrait of Jesus' teachings, and that—contrary to the impression fostered by the book—the findings reported here represent the idiosyncratic opinions of one particular faction of critical scholars.

The aims of the Jesus Seminar are generally consonant with the work of historical scholarship since the Enlightenment: the participants seek to reconstruct the history of earliest Christianity. This project entails a critical interrogation of the gospels as source documents, distinguishing, insofar as possible, the various streams of tradition and interpretation that underlie the canonical texts. The quest of "the historical Jesus"—as distinct from the Church's subsequent representations of him—has engaged the efforts of New Testament scholars for the better part of two hundred years. Scholars have published hundreds of monographs on this subject, and every student who has taken a New Testament course in a college or seminary has been exposed to the complex problem of recovering a clear picture of the Jesus of history. Thus it is somewhat disingenuous for the editors of *The Five Gospels* to assert that the publication of this volume "represents a dramatic exit from windowless studies and the beginning of a new venture for gospel scholarship." The only new angle here is the decision to publish a complete edition of the gospels that seeks to represent schematically a scholarly consensus about the authenticity of each individual sentence attributed to Jesus. In theory, the project could produce an interesting freeze-frame shot of the status of gospel scholarship near the end of the twentieth century: not exactly the epoch-making scientific breakthrough of a Galileo, but a modestly worthwhile survey of opinion.

The difficulty arises, however, in the execution of the plan. The participants in this poll were those who chose to take part over a span of eight years in a seminar sponsored, not by one of the major scholarly societies such as the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* or the Society of Biblical Literature, but by Funk's maverick entrepreneurial venture, the Westar Institute, located in Sonoma, California. This self-selected group, though it includes several fine scholars, does not represent a balanced cross-section of scholarly opinion. Furthermore, the criteria for judgment that are employed in *The Five Gospels* are highly questionable.

II

For the sake of brevity, I shall note just four ways in which the methodology of the project is problematic.

First, there is the problem of the selection and dating of sources. The members of the Seminar determined—quite properly—that sayings attested in the earliest extant sources have the greatest claim to authenticity. But what are these earliest sources? The Jesus Seminar adopts the standard two-source theory as a solution to the synoptic problem: Mark is the earliest of the three synoptic gospels; in composing their gospels, Matthew and Luke used Mark along with a hypothetical common source Q (short for the German *Quelle*: "source"), consisting primarily of sayings of Jesus. One would think, then, that this analysis ought to put the two synoptic sources, Mark and Q, on roughly equal footing as sources for authentic Jesus material. However, the Jesus Seminar dates the Q material earlier than the traditions found in Mark, during the period 50-70 A.D. Mark, dated around 70 A.D., in fact fares poorly in the Seminar's judgment as a source for Jesus-sayings. Only one sentence in this entire gospel receives the red-letter treatment: "Pay the emperor what belongs to the emperor, and God what belongs to God" (Mark 12:17).

On the other hand, the extracanonical Gospel of Thomas is dated—for reasons never explained in the book—to the same early period as Q. This extraordinarily early dating of Thomas, along with the judgment that it is literarily independent of the synoptic tradition, becomes a crucial factor in the Jesus Seminar's weighting of evidence:

> The first written gospels were Sayings Gospel Q and *possibly an early version of* the Gospel of Thomas. The Gospel of Mark was not composed until about 70 A.D. For these reasons alone, it is understandable that double attestation in the early independent sources Thomas and Q constitutes strong *documentary* evidence [emphasis added].

This valuing of Thomas as an early and independent source is, however, a highly controversial claim. The traditional opinion among New Testament scholars has been that the Gospel of Thomas—a text known to us through a fourth-century Coptic text discovered at Nag Hammadi in Egypt—was composed in the second century, perhaps containing some independent tradition but heavily shaped by Gnostic teachings. Many scholars regard it as literarily dependent on the canonical gospels, though this remains a debated issue. No hint of these debates, however, is allowed to appear in the pages of *The Five Gospels*, which unhesitatingly treats the hypothetical Q and a hypothetical "early version of Thomas" as the crucial sources for locating authentic Jesus tradition. Here some suspicion begins to arise concerning the candor of the editors of this book. They claim that they want to make the results of the best critical scholarship available to the public, but their working method trades upon a controversial and im-

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plausible early dating of Thomas, without offering the reader any clue that this is a shaky element in their methodological foundation.

The second major methodological issue is the Seminar's use of the criterion of dissimilarity for assessing the authenticity of Jesus tradition. This criterion posits that sayings material may be judged certainly authentic only when it is *dissimilar* both to antecedent Jewish tradition and to subsequent Christian tradition. Thus it is argued, for example, that Jesus probably did not say at his final meal with his disciples, "Have some, this is my body" [*sic*] (Mark 14:22). Why? Because the Church's liturgical tradition reports that he did; therefore, we cannot be sure that this saying was not read back into the story. On the other hand, Jesus almost certainly said, "Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44a). Why? Because it allegedly "cuts against the social grain" of Judaism—and presumably it isn't anything the early Church would have invented, either.

The strict application of the criterion of dissimilarity has two immediately evident results. First, almost all the material in the Gospels is excluded as being either too Jewish or too Christian; this criterion is largely responsible for the fact that "82 percent of the words ascribed to Jesus in the gospels were not actually spoken by him, according to the Jesus Seminar." (If one counts the possibly authentic sayings printed in pink type, the percentage of inauthentic material is significantly reduced.) Indeed, one is surprised that 18 percent remains untouched by this criterion, and one suspects that a more rigorous application could eliminate even more. For instance, the early Church *did* teach love of enemies in a way that reflects direct dependence upon the Old Testament rather than upon Jesus (cf. Romans 12:20-21, quoting Proverbs 25:21). Perhaps the Jesus Seminar was not sufficiently "critical" at this point. The second consequence is that the "Jesus" who emerges from this procedure is necessarily a free-floating iconoclast, artificially isolated from his people and their Scripture, and artificially isolated from the movement that he founded.

As Nils Dahl rightly observed more than forty years ago, the criterion of dissimilarity must be applied in order to identify "a critically assured *minimum*," which must then be supplemented by other criteria and evidence. Indeed, Jesus becomes comprehensible *precisely as a historical figure* only when he is placed in historical continuity with first-century Judaism and with emergent Christianity. As Dahl insisted,

> In no case can any distinct separation be achieved between the genuine words of Jesus and the constructions of the community. We do not escape the fact that we know Jesus only as the disciples remembered him. Whoever thinks that the disciples completely misunderstood their Master or even consciously falsified his picture may give fantasy free reign.

The work of the Jesus Seminar exemplifies the fantasy that Dahl prophesied.

The third major methodological problem, closely related to the second, is the Jesus Seminar's tendentious insistence on finding a "non-eschatological Jesus." The members assert repeatedly that Jesus did not proclaim a message of God's future intervention in history and final judgment. Instead,

> God was so real for him that he could not distinguish God's present activity from any future activity. He had a poetic sense of time in which the future and the present merged, simply melted together, in the intensity of his vision. But Jesus' uncommon views were obfuscated by the more pedestrian conceptions of John [the Baptist], on the one side, and by the equally pedestrian views of the early Christian community, on the other.

Jesus' "poetic sense of time" was lost on the disciples, however: "Jesus' followers did not grasp the subtleties of his position and reverted, once Jesus was not there to remind them, to the view they had learned from John the Baptist." Consequently, according to the Seminar, nearly all the earliest Christian writings are infected by an eschatological perspective—including Q (thus the apocalyptic material in Q must be assigned to "late Q"!). But now, at last, the Jesus Seminar has come along to rescue "traces of that enigmatic sage from Nazareth—traces that cry out for recognition and liberation from the firm grip of those whose faith overpowered their memories."

This must be deemed a "methodological problem" because the Jesus Seminar employs its conviction that Jesus was a non-eschatological thinker as a stringent criterion for sorting the authenticity of the sayings material. Everything in the gospels that smacks of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology is firmly consigned to black type. A "cameo essay" explains the reasons for this decision roughly as follows: the gospels contain sayings proclaiming God's rule as both present and future; Jesus could not have said both things; the future eschatology appears "bombastic and threatening"; therefore, Jesus must have spoken of God's rule only as present reality. This is confirmed by the fact that the major parables of Jesus "do not reflect an apocalyptic view of history." This bizarre claim can be supported only by screening the parables critically in such a way that their obviously apocalyptic elements are judged inauthentic. For example, one of the "major parables" said to illustrate Jesus' non-apocalyptic view of history is the parable

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of the corrupt judge (Luke 18:1-8). The Jesus Seminar deems vv. 2-5 to be possibly authentic (pink) but vv. 6-8 to be inauthentic (black). Why? Because the latter verses speak of God's eschatological vindication of his elect and of the future coming of the Son of Man; therefore, they must have been composed by Luke. The same sort of circular reasoning is applied to pericope after pericope in the gospels to exclude future eschatology from Jesus' teaching.

In contrast to this arbitrary procedure, consider the following statement of the mainstream critical consensus by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, a scholar who can hardly be accused of traditionalist bias: "Exegetes agree that it is the mark of Jesus' preaching and ministry that he proclaimed the *basileia* of God as future and present, eschatological vision and experiential reality." Characteristic of early Christian preaching is its *proleptic* eschatology, its conviction that God's coming kingdom has already begun to impinge upon the present in such a way that God's final justice is prefigured—but hardly fully realized—now. (For an elegant extended example, see Romans 8.) The gospel tradition offers us strong reasons to believe, as Schüssler Fiorenza indicates, that a similar proleptic eschatology characterized Jesus' own proclamation. Only flat-footed rationalists could deem it impossible for both the present and future Kingdom sayings to be held in Jesus' mind at the same time.

Finally, the attempt to assess the authenticity of Jesus' *sayings* in isolation from a more comprehensive reconstruction of the events of his life, ministry, and death is methodologically problematic. The Jesus constructed by the Jesus Seminar is a talking head, whose teachings bear no intelligible relation to his death on a cross. If Jesus said only the sorts of things judged authentic by the Seminar, it is very difficult to see how he could have been mistaken by Jewish and Roman authorities as a messianic pretender who needed to be executed. Again, Dahl made the point clearly:

> One point in the life of Jesus is unconditionally established: his death. A historically tenable description of the life of Jesus would be possible only in the form of a description of his death, its historical presuppositions, and the events preceding and following it.

More recently, E. P. Sanders' important book *Jesus and Judaism* takes a methodological path similar to that which Dahl had recommended, building its account of Jesus upon the events and actions of Jesus' career that can be most securely ascertained, rather than upon the tradition of his sayings, insisting that "a good hypothesis about Jesus' intention and his relationship with his contemporaries . . . should offer a connection between his activity and his death." The result is a Jesus whose central concern was the hope of God's eschatological restoration of Israel—a theme that is emphatically consigned to black type in *The Five Gospels*. Indeed, though *Jesus and Judaism* was published in the year that the Seminar began its work (1985), the Seminar inexplicably ignores Sanders' methods and conclusions.

By contrast, rather than setting the sayings in a narrative context of historical events, the Jesus Seminar sees them as fragmentary materials mediated by oral tradition that—by its account—retains only short, memorable aphorisms and parables, floating free from association with any particular historical event. Allegedly, then, we can recover an approximation of "what Jesus really said" by applying general laws of oral transmission to strip away accretions and modifications. One wonders whether the Seminar adopts too sanguine a view of its ability to work backwards from texts written down many years later to restore Jesus' pristine oral teachings.

In any case, the Seminar's concentration on Jesus' *words* as the primary evidence for historical knowledge about him is a late-blooming legacy of the otherwise defunct "New Quest of the Historical Jesus," a spinoff of Bultmannian existentialist theology that was briefly fashionable in the 1960s. The New Quest—some of whose original practitioners are among the members of the Jesus Seminar—sought to recover from Jesus' sayings and parables his "understanding of existence," detached from any particular claims about his life and actions. By drawing heavily upon the Gospel of Thomas and by packaging its results in a more user-friendly format than the abstruse hermeneutical musings of the "New Quest," the Seminar has updated this approach.

Whether it has thereby discovered anything that ought to be classified as historical knowledge is exceedingly doubtful. What the members of the Jesus Seminar have done, in effect, is merely to offer us an anthology of their favorite Jesus-sayings. In this respect, as in several others, they do indeed follow the spiritual and intellectual example of Thomas Jefferson, who—though he declared himself a "Materialist" in contrast to the "Spiritualism" of Jesus—undertook the task of producing an expurgated edition of "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth Extracted Textually from the Gospels":

> Among the sayings and discourses imputed to Him by His biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism, and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same Being. I separate, therefore, the gold from the dross; restore to Him the former, and leave the latter to the stupidity of some, and roguery of

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others, of His disciples.

How did Jefferson distinguish between the sublime teachings of Jesus and the inventions of "the groveling authors" who wrote the gospels? "The difference is obvious to the eye and to the understanding," for the authentic words of Jesus stand out from their setting in the gospels like "diamonds in a dunghill." For the Jesus Seminar, as for Jefferson, an a priori construal of Jesus and his message governs the critical judgment made about individual sayings. N. T. Wright accurately sizes up the Seminar's modus operandi:

> What is afoot . . . is not the detailed objective study of individual passages, leading up to a new view of Jesus and the early Church. *It is a particular view of Jesus and the early Church, working its way through into a detailed list of sayings that fit with this view.*

As Wright observes, this is not necessarily a bad thing: any attempt at reconstructing the historical Jesus must operate with some general hypothesis that can be tested against the evidence: nothing is gained by "pseudo-atomistic work on apparently isolated fragments." The difficulty with the work of the Jesus Seminar, however, even more than with Jefferson's scissors-and-paste job, is that so much of the evidence must be thrown away in order to save the hypothesis.

What portrait of Jesus emerges finally from the work of the Seminar? As we are repeatedly told, "He was a traveling sage who traded in wisdom." The description pegs him—as some of the Seminar members have argued in other publications—as an itinerant Cynic philosopher, rather than as a prophet or the leader of a religious reform movement. He was a "laconic sage" who never initiated debates or controversies: "He is passive until a question is put to him, or until he or his disciples are criticized." When he did speak, he spoke in parables and aphorisms, employing "exaggeration, humor, and paradox." He shocked his contemporaries by calling for a reversal of roles and overturning people's ordinary expectations. He never spoke about himself, however, or claimed to play any distinctive role in the consummation of God's purposes. Certainly he never claimed to be the Messiah.

Some of the elements of this portrait are, of course, familiar from the canonical portrayals. The distortion lies more in what is denied than in what is affirmed. The depiction of Jesus as a Cynic philosopher with no concern about Israel's destiny, no connection with the concerns and hopes that animated his Jewish contemporaries, no interest in the interpretation of Scripture, and no message of God's coming eschatological judgment is—quite simply—an ahistorical fiction, achieved by the surgical removal of Jesus from his Jewish context. The fabrication of a non-Jewish Jesus is one particularly pernicious side effect of the Jesus Seminar's methodology. One would have thought that the tragic events of our century might have warned us to be wary of biblical scholars who deny the Jewishness of Jesus.

III

Who are the scholars that make up the membership of the Jesus Seminar? The group's publicity creates the impression that they represent a broad cross-section of this country's leading critical scholars. It is asserted that "the scholarship represented by the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar is the kind that has come to prevail in all the great universities of the world." Though the Seminar expects to encounter hostile criticism, its work is said to be under attack principally "by conservative Christian groups" and by "those who lack academic credentials." The casual reader of the introduction to *The Five Gospels* might suppose that no serious New Testament scholar would differ materially from the consensus represented by this book, were it not for the single telltale polemical reference to anonymous "elitist academic critics who deplored the public face of the seminar." In fact—let it be said clearly—most professional biblical scholars are profoundly skeptical of the methods and conclusions of this academic splinter group. The membership of the Jesus Seminar does *not* include the overwhelming majority of the New Testament scholars who teach at the major graduate institutions in the United States. This may be verified by a check of the roster of seventy-four Fellows of the Seminar provided as an appendix. Not one member of the New Testament faculty from Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Duke, University of Chicago, Union Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt, SMU, or Catholic University is involved in this project. It probably goes without saying that the faculties of evangelical seminaries are not represented here. Nor are any major scholars from England or the Continent.

This is not to say that the Seminar participants are without credentials. They hold doctorates from reputable institutions, with Claremont and Harvard being the most heavily represented, in that order. The point is simply that this imaginative book has been produced by a self-selected body of scholars who hold a set of unconventional views about Jesus and the gospels. They are of course free to publish these views; however, their attempt to present these views as "the assured results of critical scholarship" is—one must say it—reprehensible deception.

The Seminar's disingenuous self-representation stands in service of a larger agenda: the deliberate creation of a new gospel. *The Five Gospels* is the realization of a vision clearly articulated by Funk in his keynote address at the opening meeting of the

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Jesus Seminar in 1985, subsequently published in *Forum*, the Westar Institute's journal. "The religious establishment has not allowed the intelligence of high scholarship to pass through pastors and priests to a hungry laity," and television preachers have "played on the ignorance of the uninformed." Thus, the Jesus Seminar rides to the rescue: "Our work . . . will spell liberty for . . . millions." Funk opines that "we are having increasing difficulty these days in accepting the biblical account of the creation and of the apocalyptic conclusion in anything like a literal sense." For him, the Bible's story of the world's history and destiny is a narrative fiction that has lost its credibility and usefulness in late modernity. It is not only the mythic beginning and ending of the Bible that have become problematic, however, but also the "hypothetical middle—Jesus of Nazareth." After all, as we are informed in *The Five Gospels*, "the Christ of creed and dogma, who had been firmly in place in the Middle Ages, can no longer command the assent of those who have seen the heavens through Galileo's telescope. . . . Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo have dismantled the mythical abodes of the gods and bequeathed us secular heavens."

> To put the matter bluntly, we are having as much trouble with the middle—the messiah—as we are with the terminal points. What we need is a new fiction that takes as its starting point the central event in the Judeo-Christian drama and reconciles that middle with a new story that reaches beyond old beginnings and endings. In sum, we need a new narrative of Jesus, a new gospel, if you will, that places Jesus differently in the grand scheme, the epic story.

In the work of the Jesus Seminar, Funk's desideratum has been achieved: a new gospel that disposes of the embarrassments of apocalyptic ends. The pathos—or bathos—of the project resides in the incongruity between Funk's epic pretensions and the actual findings of the Seminar. Does the passive, politically correct, laconic sage who speaks in the red type of *The Five Gospels* have the capacity to remake our imaginative world and provide a new fiction within which millions might find meaning for their lives? Surely not.

But even if the grand design of liberating millions through a new gospel should fail to pan out, Funk also has a more modest and realistic aim: "If we are to survive as scholars of the humanities, as well as theologians, we must quit the academic closet. And we must begin to sell a product that has some utilitarian value to someone—or which at least appears to have utilitarian value to someone." Presumably, in the commercial realm, *The Five Gospels* will fulfill this hope. This likelihood is immeasurably enhanced by the fact that one of the "Fellows" of the Jesus Seminar is moviemaker Paul Verhoeven (*Robocop, Basic Instinct*), who reportedly plans to turn the Seminar's findings into a Hollywood screenplay.

Funk's concern for the *appearance* of utilitarian value perhaps explains the peculiar way in which *The Five Gospels* deploys the rhetoric of empiricism ("empirical, factual evidence," "independent, neutral observers"), despite Funk's own earlier avowal that "our fictions, though deliberately fictive, are nevertheless not subject to proof or falsification." If indeed, as Funk suggests, "we need a fiction that we recognize to be fictive," the present volume is an odd way of filling the prescription. *The Five Gospels* purports to offer precisely the opposite: a factual Jesus discovered by scientific methods and disentangled from the fictive Jesus rendered in the gospel narratives. Truth in advertising would be served if Funk's 1985 essay were published in place of the book's present introduction.

So, when I return my brother-in-law's phone call, here is what I shall say: No, the case argued by this book would not stand up in any court. The critical study of the historical Jesus is an important task—perhaps important for reasons theological as well as historical—but *The Five Gospels* does not advance that task significantly, nor does it represent a fair picture of the current state of research on this problem. Some of its purported revelations are old news, and many of its novel claims are at best dubious. No, I was not involved in the project, nor were any of my colleagues at Yale and Duke, all of whom share my view that the Jesus Seminar is methodologically misguided. Should you take it seriously? Only if you want to compare its findings to other scholarly reconstructions of Jesus of Nazareth. If you are interested in the problem, there are at least a dozen other books I would recommend in preference to this one. But their authors are less likely to be interviewed on the radio: no scandalous sound bites. FT

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Books In Review

Legislating Morality?

MAKING MEN MORAL: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND PUBLIC MORALITY. By ROBERT P. GEORGE. *Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press. 241 pp. $42.*

Reviewed by **Joseph R. Reisert**

THAT ANY attempt by the state to legislate morals must be illegitimate has become a platitude of contemporary political thought, and Robert George's new book, *Making Men Moral*, challenges it directly. Situating himself within the natural law camp, George deftly brings that tradition into a dialogue with contemporary liberalism. He proceeds dialectically, first engaging traditional supporters of morals laws and then some of their liberal opponents, including Ronald Dworkin, John Rawls, Joseph Raz, and others. George concludes by presenting "the basic outlines" of his own theory of civil liberties. The results will surely interest adherents of natural law and liberals alike.

George opens with the case for morals laws. Right behavior, he notes, requires more than knowing what one ought to do and why; one must also resist temptation and carry out the required action. Experience teaches that virtuous action is difficult because pleasure and various other goods tempt us to do wrong. Morals laws attach legal penalties to immoral acts in order to make performing them less attractive than refraining from them. They aim to encourage people to fulfill the *outward demands* of morality, as George rightly stresses:

> Laws cannot make men moral. Only men can do that; and they can do it only by freely choosing to do the morally right thing for the right reason. Laws can command outward conformity to moral rules, but cannot compel the internal acts of reason and will which make an act of external conformity to the requirements of morality a moral act.

Laws can restrain people from harming themselves and others, but any educative effect they may have will be indirect. By requiring people to conform their actions to the demands of morality, morals laws may help them come to appreciate the superiority of the legally permitted activity to the illegal vice.

THE OBJECTION arises, Why should the state legislate morality? Should we not leave the promotion of good character to parents? George answers that no parent alone can shield children from exposure to violence, drug use, pornography, and other genuinely *social* ills. Children learn from the society around them. The widespread availability of drugs and pornography undermines parents' efforts to protect their children from vice. Cultural understandings, for example about sexuality and marriage, structure the kinds of people we become and the relationships we form. George uses an apt environmental metaphor to support his point: just as the state restricts apparently private activity in order to protect its natural ecology, so also may it legitimately enact laws to protect the "moral ecology."

Since laws aim at helping people to lead good and worthwhile lives, they must not, according to George, prohibit any morally indifferent or valuable activity. Laws, therefore, can always be challenged on the basis of reasons. For example, legislators who upon reflection conclude that pornography is morally indifferent may not legitimately elect to outlaw it. Significantly, the converse does not hold: the state need not prohibit every vice, though it may do so. Legislators may elect for prudential reasons to tolerate some vices.

George enumerates many such reasons, but the most important are two. First, the legislator might want to limit governmental power in order to reduce the possibility of its abuse. Second, laws requiring external conformity to moral rules may promote an atmosphere of hypocritical moralism, hindering the moral education they were designed to assist. In short, George holds that morals laws do not significantly differ from other criminal laws. Moral wrongs, violent or not, may legitimately be criminalized; legislative prudence must determine when they should be.

WHY, then, do liberals insist that the state may not legitimately outlaw immoral behavior? Simply put, they aim to protect individual freedoms. They prohibit morals laws and guarantee rights in order to allow each individual to decide for himself (as far as possible) what is virtue and what is vice and then to act accordingly. Although George considers each thinker separately, his general response to the liberals can be easily outlined.

George treats most severely the "anti-perfectionist" liberals—including Dworkin, Rawls, and David Richards—who contend that the state should, so far as possible, establish laws without reference to controversial views about the best human life. They prescind from undertaking judgments about human goods in the hope of attracting universal support for the regimes they propose. Individual freedoms, they hold, can be restricted only for reasons commanding near-universal acceptance. Thus they acknowledge the legitimacy of ordinary criminal laws protecting persons and property but deny the legitimacy of morals laws. George replies that the anti-perfectionists' ideal is only a chimera: no suitably uncontroversial premises in fact exist. In particular, the anti-perfectionists' preference for liberty is itself only a controversial preference for a particular kind of freedom. Protecting the

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rights of the consumers of pornography requires restricting the liberty of those who want to rear their children in a moral environment free from its degrading influence, and the choice between these is clearly a matter of controversy.

Though he subjects his liberal opponents to a scathing critique, George aims to establish civil liberties on a more secure foundation than the anti-perfectionists propose. He advances a "perfectionist" view of civil liberties—so called because it posits that rights exist in order to guarantee the freedom to pursue genuinely worthwhile activities. He writes:

> Where liberty or privacy serves basic human goods as important means and conditions, one has reasons (which are often conclusive) to respect the liberty or privacy of others (and, thus, to recognize a right to the liberty or privacy in question) even when one has competing motives not to; and governments have reasons not only to respect, but to protect such rights.

Consider the example of freedom of speech. According to George, "speech that facilitates genuine cooperation for worthy ends is valuable." Most speech contributes to some valuable purpose: speech constitutes in large part the basis of our friendship and community with others; honest business transactions also have important instrumental value. Valuable political speech includes every contribution to the national conversation regarding the common good, including, though hardly limited to, criticism of the government and expression of popular feelings. Adding to the above considerations the prudential concern that government officials might abuse their authority to limit valuable forms of speech improperly, George concludes that the state should only rarely restrict speech on the basis of its content. He indicates that expressions of "gratuitous abuse" and "sheer manipulation" deserve no protection; so also with criminal conspiracy and speech "likely to result in serious harms or injustices."

This account of rights has the powerful advantage that every legal right can be justified by reference to some good or range of goods it protects. Friends of civil liberties may object that jurists and legislators will be insensitive to the wide (and often disconcerting) range of worthwhile speech. Two answers can be offered. First, since restrictions must be justified, one can always defend one's claim to speak by appealing to the value of one's expression. Second, George's theory indicates what speech must be permitted at a minimum, not what must be proscribed; legislators and to some extent the courts also must take into account prudential considerations that frequently suggest more, not less, tolerance.

GEORGE presents a similar, but somewhat less successful, account of religious liberty. He justifies freedom of religion not on skeptical grounds but with reference to the good of religion in human life. He contends that everyone, including atheists and agnostics, acknowledges the importance of "considering whether there is some ultimate, more-than-human source of meaning and value" and then of living one's life according to one's conclusion. If there is a God, we should surely live in harmony, even, in a manner of speaking, in friendship, with God. Just as human friendship depends on freedom—we choose our friends and willingly spend time with them—so, too, does a genuine relationship with God require willing involvement. Thus George concludes that "government may never legitimately coerce religious belief; nor may it require religious observance or practice; nor may it forbid them for religious reasons," although it may legitimately "encourage and support religious reflection, faith, and practice."

That belief may not be compelled follows from its nature: it is an "interior act," performed freely or not at all. Likewise, religious observances may not be coerced because they, too, must be willed freely to be genuinely *religious* observances. In this way, religious and moral acts are alike: no one can be religious or moral without choosing to be so. As suggested above, George defends morals laws by noting that while coercion cannot make people moral, it may help them to become so by preventing them "from habituating themselves to corrupting vices." Although George rejects this contention, an argument parallel to his can justify religious coercion; indeed, Saint Augustine presents such an argument in a letter to the Donatist bishop of Cartennae, Vincentius. Augustine acknowledges that coercion cannot make anyone "good in spite of his own will," but it can bring someone "through fear of suffering" to abandon religious error and to seek truth. Initially an opponent of religious coercion, Augustine came to permit it both for theological reasons and on the basis of its empirical success: people who at one time had rejected the Church eventually gave it their willing allegiance—after the imposition of coercion led them to reconsider their views.

George's arguments in principle against coerced religious practice succeed only if he can establish the *distinctiveness* of religion as an aspect of human fulfillment. But as George depicts it, religion seems to be a mixture of practical reasoning about how to live and friendship or communion with one's coreligionists and one's God. If so, then there may be no distinctive, perfectionist argument to justify religious freedom in principle. However, the moral rights to freedom of speech and assembly supply ample grounds for a legal right to freedom of religion. In any event, overwhelming and conclusive reasons of prudence argue for the legal recognition of religious freedom. Indeed, much of George's own case for freedom of religion rests on prudential considerations: "Any attempt by government to coerce religious faith and practice, even *true* religious faith and

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practice, will be futile, at best, and is likely to impair people's participation in the good of religion."

George's perfectionist theory of civil liberties merits scholarly attention, especially from liberals who too easily dismiss natural law thinking as an outdated approach to politics and ethics. *Making Men Moral* shows unequivocally that natural law thinking can support and improve our liberal political regime. It hints at intriguing possibilities for concrete improvements to American laws and institutions, but as a philosophical book, it can only bring them up in passing. George acknowledges an obligation to his readers to supply a fuller treatment of specific applications in future works. We will await those eagerly.

The Conundrums of Bioethics

A Matter of Principles? Ferment in U.S. Bioethics. Edited by Edwin R. DuBose, Ronald P. Hamel, and Laurence J. O'Connell. *Trinity Press International. 400 pp. $30.*

Reviewed by **Gilbert Meilaender**

The political theorist J. G. A. Pocock once enunciated his First Law of interdisciplinary communication: "Nearly all methodological debate is useless, because nearly all methodological debate is reducible to the formula: You should not be doing your job; you should be doing mine." It is worth keeping Pocock's law in mind when reading a volume like the one here under review.

In an engaging Afterword to the volume, James Wind describes the book's project in medical terms—as a "case conference" in which the "patient" is a particular method of bioethical inquiry designated "principlism." Contributors to the volume agree, Wind notes, that the patient is ill. The volume gathers together a collection of essays that grew out of several conferences on "principlism" sponsored by the Park Ridge Center, a well-known bioethics think tank whose special concern is for the role of religion in medical ethics.

The method termed principlism is represented by only one essay in the volume, though it is a very careful piece by James Childress. "Principlism" is the name now given to a particular mode of bioethical reflection and inquiry that is ably represented by the book *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, written by Childress and Tom Beauchamp, and now in its fourth edition. It is a method seemingly deductivist in approach, in which one begins with moral theories, moves to principles justified by those theories, then to rules derived from the principles, and finally to judgments about particular actions or cases. Hence, principlism is an excellent example of what is often termed "applied ethics."

Such an approach has been very influential in this country, first perhaps in the work (from 1975-78) of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, then much more widely. The National Commission's *Belmont Report*, in which it sought briefly to articulate the method underlying its deliberations on a variety of topics, made three principles—respect for persons, beneficence, and justice—central. Beauchamp and Childress, during their years together at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown, turned these three into four: respect for autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice. And it soon became common to analyze bioethical issues through the lens of these principles, which were deemed to be prima facie binding but not absolute. Such analysis most often discovered a tension between respect for persons and the requirements of beneficence, a clash that moral theory may not be able to resolve, leaving us to balance these principles as best we can. The pedagogical benefits of this approach were considerable, and the clarity of the categories of analysis may also have appealed to practitioners seeking some terms within which to conceptualize their problems.

In recent years, however, a number of voices have joined in a chorus claiming that principlism itself is ill, that the method is not well suited to the needs of bioethics. *A Matter of*

Gilbert Meilaender *is Professor of Religion at Oberlin College.*

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Principles? is intended to support such a judgment and suggest new directions. Part One of the book contains two essays that offer some understanding of principlism as a method of bioethical inquiry—the essay by Childress, and a lengthy, powerful essay by Renee Fox describing the growth of the bioethics movement in this country. Fox has long been a critic of the principlist approach, but even for those more sympathetic to the method, her essay will provide a very useful overview of the rise of bioethics over a period of several decades. (She is not, however, always clear about whether principlism fails as a *method* of moral analysis, or whether it fails because of a specific *normative* commitment to autonomy.)

Parts Two, Three, and Four of the volume provide, respectively, diagnoses of the illness of principlism, treatment alternatives, and prognoses. Because each of these parts contains a number of essays by authors whose only common ground may seem to be opposition to principlism, they resist easy summary. But since it may not be immediately apparent how the treatment alternatives proposed address the illness diagnosed, we need to attempt some summary of the critics' arguments.

The critics of principlism who offer their diagnoses in Part Two of the volume have been chosen to represent a variety of culturally diverse perspectives that principlism, the creation of North American academicians, may overlook. Thus, Henk ten Have offers a Western European perspective, though what he says—that principlism is too abstract and removed from the clinical setting—has been said by many North American bioethicists. Pinit Ratanakul, working from a Buddhist perspective, sees the standard bioethics approach as focused too greatly on purportedly autonomous individuals. Marcio Fabri dos Anjos, writing from the perspective of Latin American liberation theology, wants to liberate bioethics "so that it may avoid being merely a legitimizer of practices that fail to promote commitment between people." Yet, when he comes to identify particular problems he notes items that have been staples of criticism within mainstream bioethics for a long time—e.g., too much emphasis on curative rather than preventive medicine, isolation of dying patients in hospitals. And given that one of the criticisms of principlism is that its pretensions to universality cannot be sustained in a diverse world, it is surprising that dos Anjos should argue that in bioethics we need to "perceive truly the other as our fellow and equal"—which has the ring of a universal principle.

IN ONE OF the better "diagnosis" chapters, Cheryl Sanders nicely depicts some aspects of an African-American perspective, but she offers little detail about the particular differences this perspective might make for bioethical reflection. And her argument will probably also puzzle the reader who has been told that principlism fails in part because it is too abstractly universal, ignoring the particular contexts of diverse patients. For Sanders argues that the African-American tradition is not just a minority view that should be valued because it offers one more perspective on our concerns; rather it should be "appreciated for its universal significance" and for the fact that "it is *characteristically human* in ways that the European-American ethos is not." Christine Gudorf uses a feminist angle of vision to criticize principlism—chiefly, it seems, because of its commitment to autonomy. It will, however, be difficult for a reader to be certain what to do with Gudorf's criticisms. In addition to the principles espoused by thinkers like Beauchamp and Childress, she wants to add others—mutuality, community, solidarity. Yet, in discussing the common good she argues that "what is good for children, for the institution of the family, for husbands, or for the economy is not necessarily good for women." Perhaps not, but what of solidarity? Or again, having criticized the principlist commitment to autonomy, she argues that patients should not adopt a passive role, should not surrender control over the self to a physician even via informed consent. Perhaps true, but what of mutuality and community?

Courtney Campbell, last of the diagnosticians, is concerned that principlism—as a method—has tended to marginalize religious belief. With his essay we begin finally to see what it might mean to claim that principlism is too abstractly general and "thin" a theory to help us much in our decision-making. It is a minimal morality for a community of strangers. As such, it seeks a kind of lowest common denominator agreement, and it brackets those matters on which we might disagree most intensely—the nature of "the good life," the meaning of suffering, the foundation of human dignity. Its focus is public, and, aiming at "consensus on policy," it is more likely to lead to "moral routinization" than to "prophetic witness." Thus, Campbell notes, the principle of respect for autonomy, which had its origins in protest against physician paternalism, has become simply a way of legitimizing patient choice, even immunizing such choices from more general moral scrutiny. And the "thinness" of such an approach can be seen when we realize that it can give principled status to respect for our autonomy without providing any substantive account of the "self" presupposed by such a principle of self-determination. The problem lies, therefore, not so much with the principles as with a failure to embed them in "a broader context of ultimacy"—in, that is, the sort of context that the language of religion characteristically supplies.

In an excellent chapter later in Part Four of the volume, Richard McCormick offers a related argument that fits nicely with Campbell's thesis. McCormick suggests that it is far too easy to blame principlism for the problems of bioethics; the problems really lie in the practice of medicine itself, which has begun to lose its own characteristic culture that made it a practice and not merely a business. It has lost the richer tradition of meaning that

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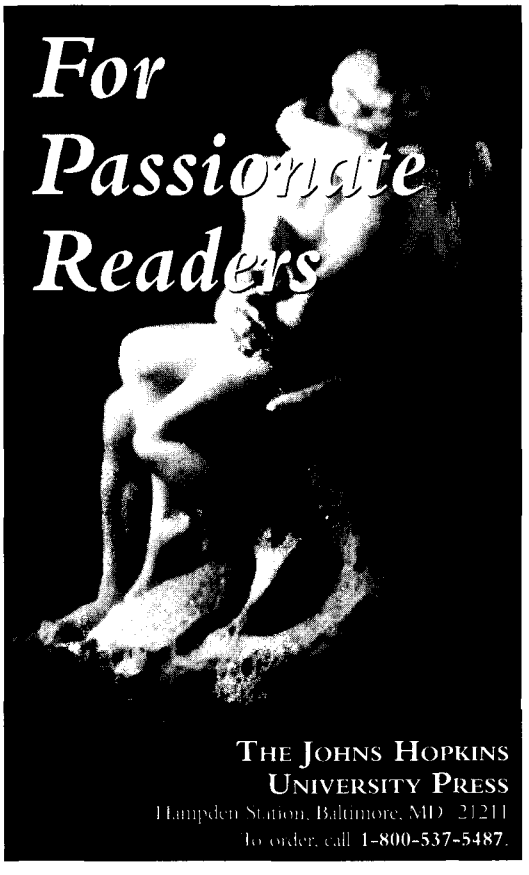
made medicine a practice with its own internal norms which were not governed by the minimal standards of public policy alone. This has made for a tame bioethics, and "one could mount a fairly persuasive argument that bioethics in the United States in the past twenty years has developed peacefully and serenely *because* it has posed no threat to the major developments in medicine of the past twenty years."

Principlism, one begins to see, has played a major role in the attempt to develop a shared language of bioethics that will make public consensus possible. As such, it must begin with generally shared moral principles and derive judgments about particular medical cases from them rather than from any norms internal to the practice of medicine itself; hence, principlism is chiefly a *method* of inquiry. But it must also avoid any ultimate contexts of meaning, visions of the good life that may not be shared by all citizens; hence, the pride of place it has tended to give to the autonomy principle. If we can agree on nothing else, we may at least agree to respect each other's autonomy.

One can begin to understand the puzzling fact that many of the critics of principlism target not the method that lies at its core but its commitment to the principle of autonomy—even while in different ways these critics often show themselves rather deeply attached, in fact, to that principle. The emphasis within principlism on respect for autonomy grows out of its attempt to forge a single, shared, dominant public discourse in bioethics. Lacking shared substantive agreements within our public life, we settle for an agreement to respect each other's autonomy.

Whatever its virtues, however, such a theory is not rich enough to offer us much substantive guidance. It tends to mask our disagreements on crucial questions about suffering, human dignity, the meaning of death, the relation of the generations. When it becomes the only language in which we discuss bioethical problems, many are bound to feel that their most deeply held beliefs—rooted in religion, in ethnic or sexual identity, or in nationality—have been lost.

The essays in Parts Three and Four offer other moral theories that might prove more helpful for bioethics than principlism. The concerns of these essays overlap in many ways, but all of them aim at a mode of bioethical discourse that will make room for a wider range of considerations. Approaches recommended include phenomenology (in an excellent chapter by Richard Zaner), hermeneutics, narrative interpretation, a focus on character rather than principles, and casuistry



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(which focuses on cases rather than on principles applied to cases). The last of these, casuistry, still bears the marks of concern for public policy and consensus, and in that respect perhaps does least to correct the particular illness that has been diagnosed. The others focus in different ways on the clinical encounter between doctor and patient, offering ways to see greater depth in our interpretation of that encounter. It may be doubted, however, whether they actually offer more guidance for the decisions we have to make. These approaches seem less to compete with principlism for a particular terrain than to provide a different aim and focus. Remembering Pocock's First Law, we may be tempted to see the achievement as a modest one.

MOREOVER, it is striking how in their different ways these essays tend to return, if not precisely to the medical paternalism that principlism rejected, then at least to a certain exaltation of the physician's role, emphasizing ways in which the doctor may see more and understand better in the clinical encounter. Stephen Toulmin's call for a return to casuistry, for example, appeals to an Aristotelian *phronesis* in which the craftsman, who knows from accumulated experience how to proceed, will know best what needs to be done. And Christine Cassel's reflections on clinical medicine lead her to call for physicians to be willing to "take tragic responsibility on their own shoulders." Perhaps we are about to return to an era of heroic physicians. Perhaps physicians have begun to doubt that the rest of us will really make the right decisions about matters of medical care. Perhaps patients have begun to tire of an approach that enshrines our right to choose but can tell us little about how or what to choose.

Any or all of these might be to the good. I suspect, however, that powerful forces left unexplored in this volume are at work here. The push for patient autonomy over the past several decades grew out of a concern that physicians were overtreating patients—who needed to be able to get medicine off their backs. But physicians are less inclined to overtreat today; indeed, they often worry that patients (and their families) want more treatment than they are inclined to give or that escalating medical costs can justify. More physicians will in the near future be asked to play the role of "gatekeeper" to scarce medical resources. The "tragic responsibility" they take upon their shoulders may look rather like the responsibility for decisions that patients would not themselves make. Not overtreatment, but undertreatment, may become cause for concern. In such a world there may still be a good bit to be said for a principle of respect for autonomy—though perhaps a more richly developed one which recognizes that the problem is not individualism but a description of the individual as isolated from all other bonds.

In that sense this book, like so many, may have arrived on the scene a little too late—illuminating circumstances through which we have come, but not necessarily preparing us well for what lies ahead. But then, "the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk." And perhaps to press the case farther would be to refuse to learn what this volume can offer, and thus to violate Pocock's First Law.

A Tradition in Crisis?

THE MORAL TRADITION OF AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM: A THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION. By H. JEFFERSON POWELL. *Duke University Press. 296 pp. $39.*

Reviewed by
Kenneth R. Craycraft, Jr.

H. JEFFERSON POWELL wants the reader to take very seriously the title of this thoughtful—and thought-provoking—book. While he thinks that it might now be in a fatal state of crisis, Powell tries to make a case that American constitutionalism, in its original genius and much of its history, is a tradition according to his carefully argued definition of that term.

Powell identifies four major antecedents to the moral tradition of American constitutionalism—Enlightenment individualist moral anthropology, Protestant civic republicanism, Anglo common law reasoning, and practical political life before and under the Articles of Confederation. And he makes a convincing case that while vestiges of the latter three remained for a while, it is Enlightenment moral individualism that has become *the* moral tradition in American constitutional thought.

Nevertheless, he argues, with underpinning from the vestigial remains of the other three antecedents, a kind of "American social morality" emerged in law and adjudication from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. This social morality, while primarily individualist, was guided by a community of discourse—a community embodied by lawyers, judges, and legislators—which saw the Constitution not merely as positive law but as the foundation for "a tradition of rational discussion" over disagreements. The Constitution created a "space," i.e., a tradition, in which sustained rational legal argument could be carried on. And it is this tradition of constitutionalism that is in a grave —perhaps fatal—"epistemological crisis."

AS A CONCEPTUAL tool for analyzing American constitutionalism and its current crisis, Powell sketches four essential elements of a "MacIntyrean tradition," as outlined in Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* First, a tradition must be extended over time. To evaluate a tradition of thought or human actions it is necessary to locate them in a persistent historical narrative. Even the very rationality a tradition uses to justify itself must be seen as a development within the history of the tradition. Second, traditions are

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embodied in discrete social contexts. While separate traditions might share certain accidental elements, one cannot call those shared traits a "tradition" in any interesting way. This is because, third, a tradition is "fundamentally interpretive in nature," such that even its use of accidental similarities will be peculiar to it alone. A MacIntyrean tradition, explains Powell, is one that is united by "shared 'goods' or 'fundamental agreements.'" This does not mean that these fundamental agreements do not have some degree of elasticity within the tradition, but the progress of agreement will be framed within a persistent, socially embodied, historical narrative.

The fourth aspect of a tradition, according to MacIntyre, is the conceptual tool Powell most heavily relies on to make his case for a moral tradition in American constitutionalism: "Traditions, rather than being bastions of immobile stability, 'embody continuities of conflict.'" That is to say, a tradition is a sustained intelligible argument, based upon a shared rationality, which will necessarily include internal conflicts, but of a kind that furthers the purposes of the tradition, and helps it to overcome inconsistencies.

Powell thinks this fourth point is true but somehow paradoxical, and he insists that it disqualifies MacIntyre's use of teleological language to describe a tradition. If conflict is essential to a tradition, says Powell, then one can hardly say that a tradition has some particular telos toward which it is consistently directed. This point is paradoxical, however, only because Powell overstates it in such a way that one could no longer be talking about the same tradition. He says that for MacIntyre, "even the most fundamental aspirations and commitments of a tradition are subject to revision." Were this the case, one certainly could not use teleological language, but then neither could one call this a MacIntyrean tradition.

MacIntyre does not suggest that the fundamental aspirations of a tradition are subject to revision, but rather that the *particular goods* that would contribute to the tradition's fundamental aspirations—its telos—are open to argument and conflict. As conflicts are resolved or as they raise new animating questions, the tradition is able to make "progress" towards its end. Moreover, there is no paradox in affirming that a tradition is characterized by internal conflict. On the contrary, by MacIntyre's reasoning authentic conflict or argument can occur no place *but* within a particular tradition, since authentic argument must necessarily share a common rationality, telos, and narrative context. Thus, as he has indicated most clearly in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, for one tradition to argue against another, it is necessary conceptually to place oneself *within* that rival tradition, else meaningful argument cannot really occur. (MacIntyre calls this "constrained disagreement.")

Powell does rightly note that, according to MacIntyre, a tradition may reach a point of "epistemological crisis," in which the tradition may find itself unable to resolve internal conflicts in its own idiom and by its own rationality, or to articulate coherently its own purpose or goal. When this happens, the tradition will either emerge with a clearer self-understanding and more coherent rationality, or disintegrate. Powell thinks that one can identify a multifaceted moral tradition in American constitutionalism, but argues that that tradition is now in a condition that merits being called an epistemological crisis, one, moreover, from which it is unlikely to emerge. Moreover, he argues that insofar as the best we can hope for from politics is the dilution and refraction of violence, Christians have no real stake in trying to sustain this now nearly moribund tradition.

Certainly Powell is correct in identifying the dominant brand of reasoning in American political and legal discourse, and he most effectively argues that liberal individualism—despite its protestations—is an all-encompassing and exclusionary vision of the good. "In demanding the exclusion from public discourse of (nonliberal) substantive accounts of the good, liberalism, of course, is enforcing its vision of the good—of human life as the individual and private pursuit of individually chosen goods."

Moreover, Powell is most perceptive in seeing that the current crisis in American constitutionalism is

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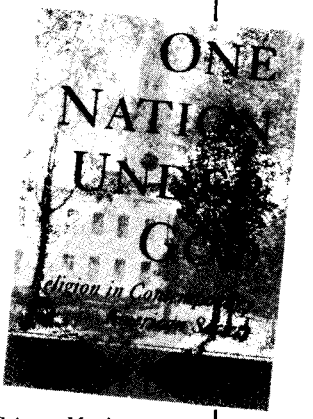

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represented by such opposite figures as Robert Bork and critical legal studies scholar Mark Tushnet, neither of whom sees the possibility of a constitutional tradition. For Bork the Constitution is mere positive law, without reference to anything outside itself, standing silent in the presence of all future laws that do not explicitly contradict it. For Tushnet the individualist demands made in the Constitution are inherently incoherent: they require both a limited, weak government that respects the "rights" of individuals, and an extensive, powerful government that uses violence to constrain individuals from intruding on the rights of each other. As Powell summarizes Tushnet: "The individualistic anthropology of liberalism inspires a political theory aimed at restraining the threat to the collectivity of [the goods of] individuals posed by their own antagonistic self-interests."

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BUT FOR all its merits, *The Moral Tradition of American Constitutionalism* reads in some ways like a work in progress, with a couple of nagging problems left unresolved.

First, Powell himself does not seem to be sure whether he wants to say that American constitutionalism is a blend of the four historical sources he discusses, or that they are four mutually exclusive competing traditions, only one of which could have won the day. Sometimes he leans toward the former view, and at other times he says that the constitutional tradition is a thoroughly Enlightenment project from the beginning. For instance, he points out that by the middle of the nineteenth century judicial decisions contained internal tensions: "The common law vision of discourse as tradition-dependent had prevailed over the competing Enlightenment preference for rationalistic logic, but most of the substantive values and commitments of the constitutional tradition were thoroughly liberal," affirming radical individualism, and so on. Powell's case for the former is not strong, but even it if were, this by no means implies that two traditions are at work. It might only mean that the winning tradition shares some accidental aspects of the losing one. But, as noted above, the interpretive use of those aspects would be (and indeed was) radically distinct in each respective tradition. Put another way, by Powell's own MacIntyrean criteria can one rationally say, "American constitutionalism for much of its history explored (mainly) liberal moral principles through the use of tradition-dependent (common law) modes of reasoning"?

Second, and more to the point of the book, Powell's positive theological prescriptions tend to suffer from the very malady he wants to criticize. He cites approvingly Stanley Hauerwas' criticism that the "primary subject of Christian ethics in America has been America," and he warns repeatedly that Christians ought not necessarily frame their own moral reasoning around some mandate to preserve the moral-legal-political institutions of liberal democracy. For instance: "The liberty of which constitutionalism has spoken has never been Christian freedom, and so the degeneration of the tradition's internal rationality is not itself of grave importance to Christians." But Powell's own preference for something like "social democracy" is not much of an improvement over the kinds of ethics of which Hauerwas is so effectively critical.

Powell invokes John Howard Yoder in arguing for a kind of majoritarian egalitarianism as an antidote to imperial judicial activism, on the grounds that only the former will be able to channel the violence of the state in the way that a previously more restrained judicial activism once did.

> Christians should respond to the current constitutional crisis by joining others calling for a renewed judicial deference for a distinctly theological reason; majoritarian processes in the United States, at least when policed by . . . limited judicial activism, . . . increase minority leverage by increasing the variety of forums and the variety of decisionmakers available to hear and respond to deviant or weak voices (including the deviant voices in Christian communities).

It is highly doubtful that majoritarianism would have such an effect. Moreover, Powell does not give us any criteria for what distinguishes judicial deference from limited judicial activism. Finally, and perhaps most important, how does such a point of view contribute to the idea that Christians are called to a radical commitment to Jesus Christ, rather than to a radical commitment to a moral theory of equality? To put it another way, how can this free church ecclesiology-cum-political theory prevent the Church itself from affirming democratic pluralism as a theological mandate (as the quote above suggests)? No doubt Jefferson Powell would object strongly

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to a critique of his book that accuses it, at the end of the day, of giving a theological justification for dogmatic pluralism. So we can hope that the further development of his thought will work toward convincing us that this is not so.

Somebody Say Amen

Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine. By Larry Dossey. *HarperSan Francisco. 291 pp. $22.*

Reviewed by
Bernard N. Nathanson

Do you pray? How often? Whom (or what) do you pray to (or for)? Does your prayer accomplish anything demonstrable by ordinary means? Do you find yourself praying more frequently when you or your loved ones are ill? Do you ever pray (come on now, be honest) that ill may befall your adversary? Do you think your prayers are heard as clearly, are as effective, as those of your clergy? Where do your prayers go, and how do they know how to get there?

This is merely an aliquot of the myriad questions raised by Larry Dossey, M.D., in his most recent work *Healing Words* (he has written four previous books mining the same general vein). Dossey as a teenager suffered from disabling migraine headaches and after having been subjected to the traditional pharmacopeia without success, was finally cured with the use of biofeedback. As a result he became intrigued with the mind-body relationship and continues to examine it in some rather audacious exploratory probes.

Now, Dossey is decidedly no fringe nut. He is a graduate of Southwestern Medical School, he completed a residency training in internal medicine at the Parkland Hospital in Dallas (forever enshrined in memory as the facility to which President John F. Kennedy was rushed on that fateful November day in 1963), served for one year as a battalion surgeon in Vietnam, then practiced his specialty in Dallas for many years. Several years ago he gave up his private practice owing to a chronic sciatic condition from which he still suffers. He refuses to employ conventional drug therapy to relieve this condition, instead relying on what he describes as "consciousness-oriented techniques"—which as of this writing seem regrettably to have been unsuccessful. The sciatica, however, seems not, in any significant wise, to have impeded his writing avocation; his books sell at a brisk pace, although an admittedly cursory survey of the religious bookshops in New York City has disclosed that none of them carries his work.

His credentials (and credenda) in the sphere of religion are—to be charitable—murky. He waffles on the question of whether or not he is a Protestant Christian, and forthrightly denies that he has a formal affiliation to any identifiable religious subset or denomination. He is, to his credit, refreshingly candid in his dismissal of any personal involvement in Judaism, Roman Catholicism, any of the Eastern Orthodoxies—and has only a basilisk stare and a crapulous flick of the wrist for the likes of the New Age doyens: e.g., Roxayne Veasey and her magic crystals, Ted Andrews and his vibrational therapies to overcome energy lockages, Wicca (the religion of the witches). As for Shirley MacLaine and her transcendentally fatuous inventions, he has only a withering contempt.

As a trained physician, Dossey has at least a passing acquaintance with the principles of science. He insists that unless a claim (e.g., that prayer can affect the natural undisturbed course of physical illness) can be validated with rigid empirical laboratory analysis, it can be discarded as "anecdotal," the ultimate put-down in the world of medical experimentation. Thus he distances himself (with no little disdain) from Christian Science on the issue of prayer affecting the course of disease and gives short shrift to Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy and even shorter shrift to her lesser-known mentor Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (what a fine Dickensian name!) who practiced touch healing in New England in the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, there is only one reference to Christian Science in his book and that concerns the Spindrift organization—a dissident splinter group of Christian Scientists—which carried out some rather primitive experimentation attempting to correlate the effects of prayer on the growth rate of molds in the laboratory. The investigators concluded that non-directed prayer was more effective in inhibiting the growth of the molds than focused direct prayer. (Direct prayer is defined as prayer attempting to steer the system in a desired direction, while

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Religion & Public Affairs

Catholicism and Liberalism
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R. Bruce Douglass *and* ***David Hollenbach,*** *Editors*

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non-directed prayer refrains from instructing the universe what to do.)

Dossey also explores briefly the "Therapeutic Touch" technique and alludes to the work of Dolores Krieger, Ph.D., of New York University. Krieger qua healer actually never touches the subject of her healing art; her hands are maintained at a short distance from the patient's body. Dossey then cites experiments on people with artificially created deep skin wounds and indicates that Krieger, using her Therapeutic Touch (or non-touch) approach demonstrably sped the healing of the treated subjects while the placebo (untreated) group lagged appreciably.

THERE ARE, to be sure, a number of serious flaws in this type of experimentation: is it ethically sound deliberately to inflict a serious wound on a human subject merely to test a therapeutic approach? After all, a full-thickness dermal excision is no trivial matter medically, and one wonders how the informed consent for such experimentation would read. Further, while Dossey holds himself out as a scientific rigorist, where are the exacting normative standards by which to assess the biostatistical validity of these and similar experiments he quotes: where are the chi-square tests, the student-t tests, the meta-analyses, the logistic-regression analyses? These are the classic mathematical means by which one determines the confidence levels of the results of serious biological experimentation, and about any of these there is not one word in this book. Finally, why are so many of these experiments reported in obscure publications like *Subtle Energies* and not in demanding peer-review scientific and medical journals?

Dr. Dossey relies heavily on the corpus of work churned out of the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research lab (PEAR) headed by Robert Jahn, Professor of Aerospace Sciences and Dean Emeritus of the School of Engineering and Applied Science at Princeton University. This laboratory is funded not by Princeton but by private donors (the Rockefeller Foundation, the McDonnell Foundation, the Fetzer Institute). Jahn and his colleague Brenda Dunne utilize such infernal machines as the Random Events Generator (REG) to investigate the influence of human intention on machines, i.e., the role and power of human consciousness on the physical world. They style themselves as investigators of the paraphysical world and shun any connection with parapsychology (e.g., ESP).

The REG is a source of electronic "white noise" generated by a random microscopic physical process such as thermal electron currents in a solid-state diode, or a gaseous discharge, or a system of radioactive decay. Electronic logic circuitry then transforms and distributes this "noise" into a regularly spaced string of random alternating binary pulses or "bits" that other sophisticated circuitry counts, displays, and records. In short, this machine operates as an electronic coin-flipping device. By strictly controlling all other known variables, one can then measure the effect of the intention (consciousness) of the operator on the distribution curve with remarkable accuracy. (As one who turns several shades of puce trying to program the VCR, I am in no position to render a learned critique on the mathematical perfect randomness of the REG.)

Jahn and his associates contend that their experience with this and similar circuitry proves indisputably that for some operators consciousness can significantly influence the pattern of distribution of the machines: it is as if, by merely focusing your entire consciousness, you could alter the results of one thousand flips of a coin from the expected 50/50 distribution to a 60/40 or 75/25 distribution. They contend that the interaction of human consciousness with physical devices can produce results that are to be regarded as entirely unexpected in the otherwise cold mathematical world of hard data and disinterested statistical results.

But the leap from this type of ex-

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perimentation (if indeed one accepts the results of this work uncritically and undemandingly) to the influence of non-local prayer (prayer attempting to influence events at a distance) is a long and daring one, more suitable for Evel Knieval than Larry Dossey (or this reader). Is prayer a variety of focused consciousness? Is the course of human events as random as the REG? Not if one is a Skinnerian, or an adherent of one of the Eastern religions. Can the influence of non-local prayer be measured with the same mathematical precision as Jahn and his coworkers can achieve in the tightly controlled, meticulously calculated universe of his laboratory?

The overarching theme of the Dossey book, then, is that prayer of a special kind (intercessory as opposed to petitionary, and non-local as opposed to local) is a form of consciousness/human intention and therefore qualifies to be analyzed by the scientific method with respect to its effect on human events. But, as we have seen, these claims have not been subjected to critical mathematical analysis, and at times Dossey's largely anecdotal (sorry about that) data summon to mind such Marin County flakiness as Silva mind control (so hilariously satirized by Cyra McFadden in her book *The Serial*) more than the stern and disciplined approach of the PEAR lab.

But this is not to say that prayer for someone else at a distance—intercessory non-local prayer—is an exercise in futility. I once visited a dear friend who had been hospitalized and operated upon twice for a particularly malignant cancer of the bowel, and as I left his room at the conclusion of the visit he asked me, in a weak and quavering voice, "Pray for me, Bernie." I did. As a surgeon I was afraid he would not leave the hospital alive, so virulent and aggressive was the tumor. He is—to my astonishment—alive, robust, and bursting with the prospect of new projects today, a year and a half later. Go explain.

Regrettably, Dossey finally segues into shamanism, distant hexing, and the death prayer: what he terms "negative prayer." This is the least convincing segment of his book, invoking as he does Uri Geller, the mentalist, the "black thumb" curse of amateur gardeners, and post-hypnotic suggestion. The claims he makes for these quasi-epistemic phenomena are, if anything, more shaky and more anecdotal than those that precede it. This concluding section functions only to undercut a good deal of the respectful attention he has demanded of his reader to this point. In short, the carnival atmosphere does not work to evoke scientific respect.

I came away from this book largely unconvinced that non-local intercessory prayer can be scientifically equated with the effects of human consciousness on random machine activity as demonstrated by Jahn and his colleagues at the PEAR. Nevertheless, I was arrested by a charming little tale inserted almost as an afterthought into the last section of the book. Dossey tenderly recounts a visit to a patient of his who was dying of cancer. The dying man had never been a religious person, but revealed to the doctor that he had been praying frequently. When asked what he prayed for, he replied that he didn't pray for anything.

"How would I know what to ask for?" he queried.

"Well," said Dossey, "if prayer is not for asking, then what is it for?"

"It isn't *for* anything," the patient responded, "it mainly reminds me that I am not alone."

Somebody say Amen.

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity. Edited by Peter Ochs. *Paulist Press. 378 pp. $18.95 paper.*

This collection originated in a colloquium of distinguished religious thinkers—Moshe Greenberg, Hans Frei, George Lindbeck, Steven Fraade, and Peter Ochs—held at Yale in 1987-88. Out of their discussions emerged an awareness of a commonality of biblical interpretive practice cutting across conventional divisions of religious affiliation and academic specialization. In his editor's introduction, Ochs relates the common practice to the semiotic philosopher Charles Peirce's "three-part hermeneutic: claiming that the

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text (the first part) has its *meaning* (the second) *for a normative community* (the third), rather than identifying the meaning of the text with some historical or cognitive 'sense' that is available to any educated reader." In this "postcritical" epistemology, "[t]he canons of knowledge are intracommunal or intratextual, and there is no getting at these canons without intimate acquaintance with the practices through which they are displayed." Traditionalist interpreters may question the adequacy of such a hermeneutic, which locates truth so immanently in community and text that it cannot effectively testify to a God who transcends both—summoning the community into existence, revealing its sacred text, demanding that its deeply rooted practices be abandoned, and promising a day when *all* communities will bend the knee to Him alone. It might also be pointed out that while these postcritical scholars profess doubt about norms of interpretation more universal than a given "religious community's rules for reading its sacred text" (to use Frei's terms), they pay oblique homage to the opposing position in their lack of inhibitions about criticizing the rules for reading of communities that are not postcritical. There is, nonetheless, much of value in these essays: they extract from postcritical practice a cognitive sense that is now available to any educated reader. Despite occasional lapses into jargon (e.g., "triadic semiotics in the dichotomizing forms of context-specific polemics"), Ochs' introductions prove him to be a lucid and masterful guide through the intricacies of this refreshing new approach to biblical interpretation.

— Jon D. Levenson

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ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN. By DOROTHEE SOELLE. *Westminster/John Knox Press. 100 pp. $9.99 paper.*

Against what she views as the oppressive myths of capitalism, the author asserts that "the dignity of the poor lies in their being, not in their having and not having." True enough. So committed is she to the premise that "the poor are our teachers," however, that she apparently accepts anything done by the poor or in the name of the poor as being above criticism. Thus the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua is equated with one of the miracles of Christ. It is apparently irrelevant to Soelle that the poor suffered most from the Sandinista war against the economic structures of that country. This book, unfortunately, demonstrates the astonishing gullibility of intelligent people who elevate any extra-biblical authority—be it "the poor," "the Party," "leading economic indicators," or "leading theologians"—to the status of an absolute oracle that cannot be judged by the Bible (which, she says, is flawed by "patriarchy," the "underestimation of women," and even "open hatred of women"). Readers would do better to turn to Dorothy Day, whom Soelle misappropriates for her Marxist cause, or to Francis of Assisi, or, better still, to the Bible as it actually is in order to learn to pray rightly that God's kingdom might come "on earth as in heaven."

— Paul C. Fox

WHEN WOMEN WERE PRIESTS: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE SCANDAL OF THEIR SUBORDINATION IN THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY. By KAREN JO TORJESEN. *HarperSan Francisco. 278 pp.*

The title of this book is a come-on, an effort perhaps by its editor to sell books. The subtitle, however, is presumably the author's doing, and that is not encouraging. As lamentable as it may be to Torjesen, Professor of Women's Studies and Religion at Claremont Graduate School and associate at the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, there was no period in early Christian history when women were priests in the Church and her book offers no evidence to the contrary. As for the subtitle, this is another work in the tired genre of Christian history written according to what someone once called the "myth of Christian beginnings." *When Women Were Priests* is a historical tract urging Christians to extricate the Christian gospel from the "patriarchal norms of the Greco-Roman gender system" in which it became embedded and return to their "own authentic heritage." Leaving aside the deficiencies of Torjesen's historical scholarship, one can perhaps be pardoned for not taking too seriously a book whose final chapter recommends, as part of a strategy to restore Christianity's authentic heritage, discovering our roots in ancient European nature religion.

— Robert L. Wilken

MARRIAGE IN THE EARLY CHURCH. Translated and Edited by DAVID G. HUNTER. *Fortress Press. 157 pp. $10.*

With all the books and articles on early Christian asceticism, one would think that the Church fathers had little or nothing to say about marriage. But, as this collection of

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new translations shows, ascetic bishops (and others) had some very wise things to say about life in the holy estate of matrimony. Hunter's choice is eclectic and catholic, reaching from Tertullian's "To His Wife" in the early third century to Augustine's "On the Good of Marriage" in the fifth century, with selections from Clement of Alexandria, Chrysostom, even Pelagius. Hunter also includes a poem on marriage by Paulinus of Nola, a sample of ecclesiastical legislation, and two nuptial blessings from early sacramentaries. All in all a reliable and timely collection.

— R.L.W.

THE MASTERLESS: SELF AND SOCIETY IN MODERN AMERICA. By WILFRED M. MCCLAY. *University of North Carolina Press. 366 pp. $45 cloth, $16.95 paper.*

"The masterless" is D. H. Lawrence's term for the way of being in the world nurtured by modern liberalism. Walt Whitman is another major foil in McClay's exploration into the strange ways that our culture tries to combine individualistic absolutes with communal aspirations. An altogether elegant and intriguing work of cultural history. Readers may get a taste of the fine things the author does from his article in this issue, "The Hipster and the Organization Man."

THE INDEX OF LEADING CULTURAL INDICATORS. By WILLIAM J. BENNETT. *Simon & Schuster. 139 pp. $8.95 paper.*

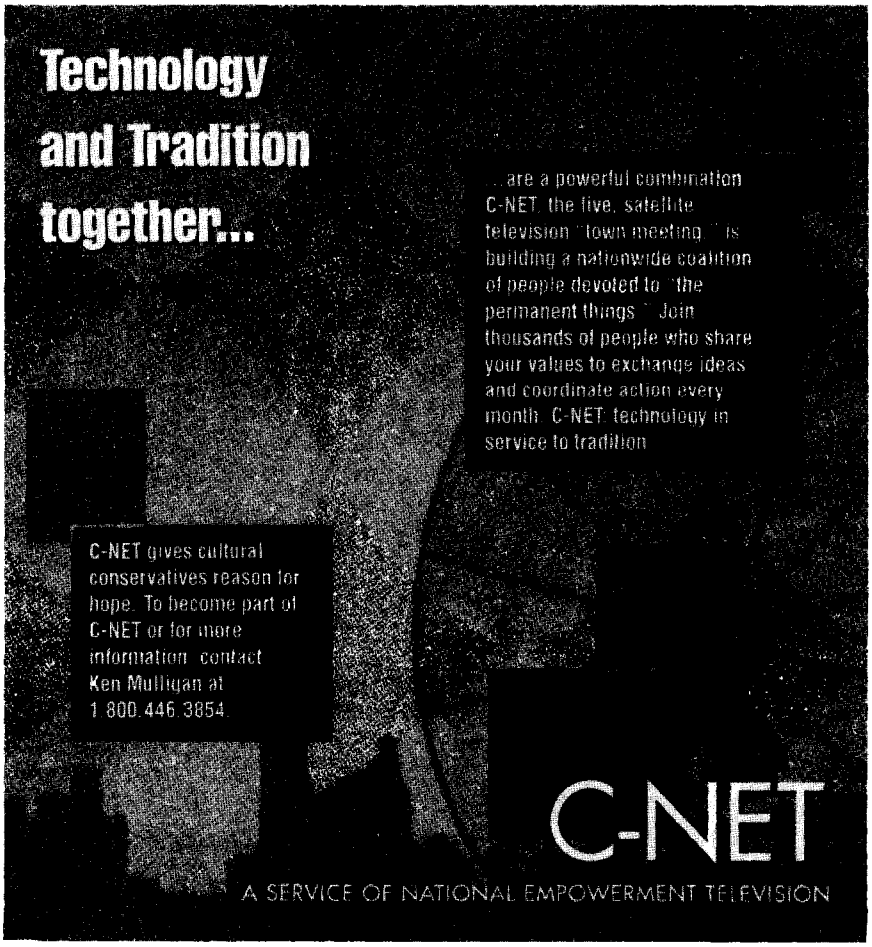
Bennett is no alarmist, but the data reported here are truly alarming. Beyond optimistic and pessimistic impressions are brute facts. Since 1960, violent crime has increased by 560 percent, the number of unmarried pregnant teenagers has nearly doubled, teen suicide has increased by more than 200 percent, SAT scores have declined by 75 percent while spending on education has increased 200 percent, and on and on. A great strength of Bennett's analysis is that he unblinkingly faces the fact that the essential problems, and solutions, are cultural, moral, and religious. An important little book to keep at hand when talking with people who are ready to get serious about the state of the nation.

REFORM JUDAISM IN AMERICA: A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY AND SOURCEBOOK. Edited by KERRY M. OLITZKY, LANCE J. SUSSMAN, and MALCOLM H. STERN. *Greenwood Press. 384 pp. $75.*

Though its high price will probably limit this book to libraries, *Reform Judaism in America* is a useful reference for anyone studying Jewish life and thought in this country. The book includes a capsule history of the Reform movement, short biographical essays of its leading lights, and a bibliography of essential Reform publications, books, articles, etc. This is the second volume of a projected three-part series. (The first volume, *Conservative Judaism in America*, was published in 1988.) One complaint: the biographical section includes only those figures who came to prominence by or before 1976.

VALUES AND PUBLIC POLICY. Edited by HENRY J. AARON et al. *Brookings Institution Publications. 216 pp. $11.95 paper.*

The appearance of such a book, and from Brookings, is important. The contents are more substantive than the anodyne title, with James Q. Wilson (on the underclass) and David Popenoe (on the family) being especially effective in explaining why public policy necessarily entails moral judgment. Os Guiness says, "This is a taboo-breaking discussion." That may be a bit much, but it does give some public policy taboos a rattling good shake.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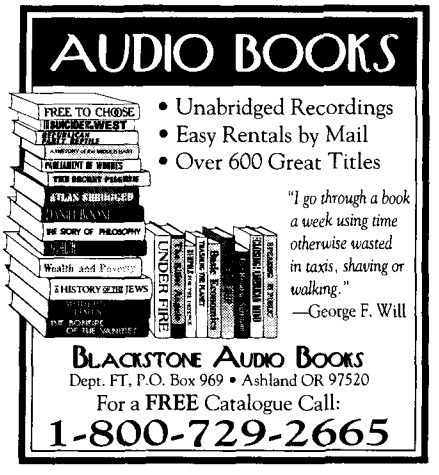
THE DRAMA OF DEMOCRACY. By GEORGE MCKENNA. *Dushkin Publishing (Guilford, CT). 718 pp. $36.95.*

Textbooks seldom appear here, but this second edition of an influential text on American government warrants mention. The author, a veteran teacher at City University of New York, is judicious and sympathetic in treating the ways in which politics, culture, and morality interact. From here students may be inspired to go on to read Tocqueville and others whom McKenna clearly reveres. Teachers take note.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CONTINUING THE REFORMATION: ESSAYS ON MODERN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT. By B. A. GERRISH. *University of Chicago Press. 283 pp. $19.95 paper.*

Gerrish of the University of Chicago Divinity School is one of the most respected historical theologians working today. These essays range from reflection on the tie between experience and doctrine in Martin Luther to the role of theology in today's university divinity school. Schleiermacher, in the view of Gerrish, turns out to be the figure who best thought ahead to many of the problems that agitate Protestant thought today.

MUTUALITY: THE HUMAN IMAGE OF TRINITARIAN LOVE. By MARY TIMOTHY PROKES. *Paulist Press. 167 pp. $12.95 paper.*

The vagrant spiritualities of our time have almost succeeded in making "spirituality" a suspect term. All the more reason to welcome this marvelous reflection by a School Sister of Notre Dame on how the Trinity illuminates all of reality and personal relations in terms of the reciprocity of giving. The author brings the classical texts into vibrant conversation with contemporary concerns about the self, community, and the possibility of love. This is a book for learning, for wondering, and for prayer.

THE BLACKWELL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MODERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT. Edited by ALISTER E. MCGRATH. *Blackwell. 701 pp. $94.95.*

A very ambitious project is perhaps more remarkable for being done at all than for not always being done very well. With respect to the numerous entries written mainly by British and American scholars, the inevitable judgment is that they are uneven. Reinhold Niebuhr was not a Presbyterian minister, and Joseph Ratzinger, who gets no mention, is a great deal more influential than many thinkers who are discussed at length. Evangelical Protestantism is overrepresented, and is it really possible that James Cone deserves twice the attention given Yves Congar? Some entries do not rise above being opinion pieces. All that said, this is an extremely valuable book that should be in any reference library and will be welcomed also by nonspecialists who want to get a handle on the directions and confusions of contemporary Christian thought.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Sex, Religion, Virtue, and Reward

"Everything goes better with Jesus." Religion is not Coca-Cola and sensible people recoil from the trivializing and vulgarizing of religion as an instrumental good. We are, after all, to love God for Himself, and the neighbor for God's sake. We do not love God and neighbor for the payoff that we get from it. Recall the colloquy between Satan and the Lord in the book of Job. And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? . . . But put forth thy hand now and touch all that he has and he will curse thee to thy face."

Does Job fear God for nought? That is the key to the entire story, and it is the answer that is sought through all the troubles that Satan visited upon Job. The question receives its answer as Job, having rejected the rationalizations offered by his friends, submits himself unqualifiedly to the wisdom and will of the Lord. "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. . . . Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Readers of the book have long been divided about what scholars call "the epilogue" (42:7-17). Calling it the epilogue suggests that it does not really belong to the story. In the last lines we read, "And after this Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. And Job died, an old man, and full of days." With everything restored, and doubly so, the story is ruined, many have complained. The happy ending means that Job did not love God for nought after all. But that does not necessarily follow. One might rather say that, because Job loved God for nought, God rewarded him with everything. Or we might want to question why on earth Job should love God for nought. In any event, the epilogue is not merely an epilogue but the necessary conclusion to the story.

Of course if you know that loving God for Himself is likely to bring all kinds of benefits, the expectation of reward might compromise the purity of love's motive. One wonders, however, whether such anxiety about "purity of heart" ("Purity of heart is to will one thing"—Kierkegaard) is entirely consonant with the biblical way of being faithful. It is Satan, after all, and not the Lord who proposes that the critical question is whether Job loves God for nought. More telling, the biblical corpus from Genesis through Revelation typically assumes a connection between righteousness and reward. The psalmist regularly links obedience and prosperity, while the repeated calls of Jesus to give up all and follow him are joined to the promise that, in return, one will receive many times more, in this world and the next. In short, it seems quite doubtful that love for God and one's neighbor must always, or even ordinarily, exclude regard for oneself.

So, you may well ask, what is Neuhaus getting at with these heavy-duty reflections? There are several occasions for thinking along these lines. A while back we criticized an evangelical publication that thought it a great thing that a kid batting in little league believed that God was rewarding his faith by sending him just the right pitches. What's going to happen to his faith when he strikes out, we wondered. We might have made the point more judiciously, and several readers wrote to chide us. What will happen, they said, is that, God willing, he will develop a more mature faith that is able to cope with adversity, but that doesn't mean he shouldn't believe that God is sending him good things now, and be thankful for it. Point taken.

Another occasion for this reflection was talking with a businessman who has written a well-received book, the point of which is that he is "in partnership with God," and God has turned out to be a partner who turns a tidy profit for them. This seemed pretty gross to our theologically refined sensibilities.

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"Look," he says, "I'm not claiming that I can prove a cause-effect connection, and I'm certainly not saying that God owes me. All I'm saying is that when twenty years ago I turned my business over to God, and promised to pray for His guidance and follow it, and promised to give generously of what the business earned, everything began to take off and has continued that way ever since. So you want I shouldn't be thankful for God's help?" Point taken.

Attention Must Be Paid

Yes, of course, things are not quite so simple as that. But before we go on to complexify and thereby obscure the simple—which is the special competence of the educated—a little respectful attention might be paid. Which brings us to sex and religion. Protestations to the contrary, sex is a very heavy-duty subject for most people and is deserving of heavy-duty reflection. Not too often, but on occasion. There are some new studies on sex, morality, and religion that may be of interest. Survey research is of course no substitute for thinking, but it can provide grist for reflection. One new study, commissioned by the Family Research Council (FRC), confirms a major sex survey commissioned by *Redbook* magazine in the mid-1970s. *Redbook* discovered a number of things that embarrassed the proponents of the sexual revolution that was then in full swing.

The survey found, for instance, that women who were sexually active by age fifteen were more likely to express dissatisfaction with their current sex life than those who abstained. That's not very surprising, there being a number of disorderly life circumstances that might precipitate, among other misbehaviors, early sex, with continuing consequences later in life. But the finding does not fit the doctrine of the sex indoctrinators who airily assert that kids are going to do it anyway and therefore they should learn to do it early and right as good, clean, healthy fun. (Twenty years ago, before the sluice gates of sexual disease were opened, it was not thought so necessary to add the adjective "safe." Come to think of it, the terms "clean" and "healthy" are no longer so frequently encountered in discussions of sex.)

The more disconcerting finding in the *Redbook* survey—disconcerting at least to the secularly enlightened—is that women who rated high on the religion index were having a lot more fun in bed. This came as good news to the Honk If You Love Jesus people. Not only did more of the highly religious women say that their sex lives are "very good," but they apparently did not have a lower expectation of what sex should be. Women who had sex only with their husbands, for instance, experienced orgasm twice as often as women with multiple partners. The above-mentioned FRC survey now produces similar findings. Among married "traditionalists" (those who strongly believe that sex should be reserved for marriage), 72 percent report high sexual satisfaction. That is 31 percent higher than unmarried "nontraditionalists" (those who take a more casual view of sex outside of marriage) and 13 points higher than married nontraditionalists. "The couple that prays together _____." Fill in the blank and come up with a snappy slogan for a campaign that might evangelize America.

According to Dr. David Larson of the National Institutes of Health, greater sexual responsiveness among the faithfully married does not appear to be connected to any special sexual technique. Rather, it says here, he found "that sexual responsiveness and satisfaction are significantly affected by the relational context in which lovemaking takes place." For this the government funds research, one may be inclined to complain. But keep in mind that we live in an age when people are uncertain about the sun's rising tomorrow until reassured by calculations of statistical incidence, so scientific confirmation of the obvious should not be scorned. Larson writes, "Women are more likely to be orgasmic when they feel secure, loved, and trusting that their man is around to stay. Without a doubt, marriage provides a foundation that increases the odds a woman will be able to risk a level of vulnerability that goes beyond the ability to participate in the act but enables her to 'let go' and experience orgasm." Commitment to marital fidelity and permanence, says Larson, "is a great motivator to make things better," including physical intimacy.

Further gleanings from an article by William Mattox of FRC include the finding of UCLA psychologists that sexual satisfaction is closely related to the absence of sexual anxiety. One reason the faithfully married have an easier time with intimacy is that they enjoy greater sexual freedom. Not sexual freedom in the sense in which the term is commonly used, namely, the freedom to do what one wants, including the freedom to sleep around. Rather, they have greater sexual freedom in the sense of freedom from the anxieties that bedevil sex for many, if not most, who are not monogamous. They are free, inter alia, from guilt about violating their own sense of morality, free from fear of sexually transmitted diseases, free from fear of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, free from fear of comparison to other partners, and free from fear of losing the partner to another. Taken all in all, it looks much more like sexual freedom than what is commonly called sexual freedom.

Mattox deplores the fact that, in all the messages about sexuality given to young people today, there is little mention of marriage and the joys of marital intimacy. The several sides in the debate over teenage sex tend to frame their messages in negative terms—e.g., "abstinence" and "safe sex." The messages tend to be aimed at avoiding problems connected with

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sexual irresponsibility. They are, says Mattox, fear-based messages and it is unrealistic to expect teenagers—who are poor risk assessors and believe they will live forever—to respond to warnings about what might, in their view, happen to someone else. Even if fear-based messages did work, Mattox thinks they don't communicate what needs to be communicated. "Sex is very different from smoking or drug use. Whereas these are bad ideas at any time and under any circumstances—hence the legitimacy of the 'just say no' message—sex is a wonderful thing when it is entered into at the right time and under the right circumstances." The upshot is that biblical teaching, moral reflection, common sense, and scientific research converge on the conclusion that good sex comes to those who wait. "If we really are as interested in sexual gratification as we say we are," says Mattox, "maybe it's time to reconnect sex with marriage."

The Way Things Are

In little league baseball, in business, in the bedroom and everywhere else, there is a design to things. Call it natural law or call it the order of creation or call it whatever, but there is a there there. Reality is not an emptiness to be shaped to our control or defined by our desires. There is the thing in itself. To be sure, we live in a fallen creation, so the design gets skewed and obscured, and our perception of the thing is wounded. Then there is the human will that is bent even against the reality that is perceived. Compounding our problems are experiences of a world out of whack, experiences that defy the very idea of design; to wit, and most notoriously, the righteous suffer while the wicked prosper. But this is no place for a full-blown theodicy, if indeed theodicy is a legitimate project for Christian theology. The modest purpose of this rumination is to suggest that we should pay more respectful attention to what simple but wise people discern to be the connection between virtue and reward. Einstein said that God does not play dice with the universe, and a lot of smart people have delighted in demonstrating that, if there is a God, the evidence suggests that he does so play dice, especially when it comes to meting out justice. That's how smart people show that they're smart. But wise people have reason to hope that Einstein was right.

Smart people have thrown into awful confusion the perception that there is an order to things, and the belief that it matters enormously whether one lives with or against that order. This is dramatically evident in the sphere of sexual behavior. When, to take an obvious example, it is observed that homogenital sex is "objectively disordered," the implication is that such disordered behavior is likely to have unhappy consequences. In the case of the actively homosexual it is not necessary to belabor the point, since those consequences—dramatically increased rates of depression, suicide, drug abuse, alcoholism, and deadly disease—are increasingly well known. Studies suggest that among those who are sexually active in the gay subculture, life expectancy is age forty-two (age thirty-nine for those dying of AIDS), more than thirty years less than the life expectancy of married men. The connection between behavior and consequence is sadly obvious.

That there is *as a general rule* a correlation between virtue and human flourishing, and between vice and misfortune, really should not be so problematic as many intellectuals seem to think it is. Maybe it has become so problematic because the exceptions to the rule are so much more intellectually scintillating, and therefore attract inordinate attention. Then too, a certain insistence upon purity of motive (whether the insistence be based on Christian or Kantian grounds) discourages a candid making of connections between virtue and reward, lest that purity be compromised by self-interest. Nor should we overlook the possibility that denying the connections is psychologically convenient for those of us who are not on such great terms with virtue. Moreover, the assumed connections between virtue and reward are frequently discredited by being associated with the caricature of a Zeus-like God hurling down blessings on the good guys and punishments on the bad. It is not that God zaps drunk drivers with car crashes, but drunk drivers tend to crash. That has something to do with the nature of things.

The popular perception and experience of a connection between righteousness and blessing is, of course, subject to distortion and abuse. Self-righteousness, smugness, and indifference to the gratuitousness of God's mercy are all sins severely condemned in the biblical tradition. But underlying the distortions and abuses is the assumed connection between righteousness and blessing, between faithfulness and promise. It is the way God is, and it is the way he has ordered his creation. It is a wonder and a disappointment that the rise of environmental sensitivity, with its increased respect for the ways of nature, has not in our culture extended to the moral sphere. Perhaps that will still happen. Respect for the wisdom of nature, reflecting the wisdom of nature's God, should, one might think, enhance receptivity to the idea of natural law. The problem may be with the term "law." It sounds so, well, legalistic. Maybe we should speak of natural wisdom, or simply the moral truth of nature. One expects that a good many of the mental gropings of New Age-ish "ecophilosophies" and "ecotheologies" are confusedly stumbling toward something like natural law.

Satan, like too many philosophers and theologians since, had nothing but contempt for the structure of human behavior. Out of contempt he comes up with his question, "Does Job fear God for

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nought?" The answer is: of course not. He feared God, and at the end of the story he learned to fear him again, because God is God and he is not. He feared God because to go against the living God is to invoke terrible consequences, and to obey him is to live in the hope of unsurpassable good. The truth of Psalm 111 still holds: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." It is the wisdom of common folk who are not embarrassed or surprised by the suggestion that there is a link between prayer and pitches in the strike zone, between giving and getting in business, between marital fidelity and better sex. Hoping for such good things may not be the most elevated reasons to fear and love God or to try to do what is right. But they are nice, everyday, human-sized reasons. They have their limitations, as we are all most expert at pointing out, but they are deserving of more respectful attention than they usually get from those who are trained to go to and fro upon the earth cleverly obscuring the obvious.

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ABSOLVO ME

"I know I have let you down, but I have also let myself down." So said Tonya Harding at a press conference, admitting that she had been hiding knowledge about the attack on Nancy Kerrigan. Jane Alpert, a 1960s radical who had taken part in bombings that injured twenty-one people, said she had spent years in therapy "learning to understand, to tolerate and forgive both others and myself." Lorena Bobbitt's lawyer said the acquittal was "a giant step forward for Lorena in the healing process. She really needs healing." And Michael Jackson's lawyer, announcing a multimillion dollar settlement for alleged child molestation: "Michael wants to get on with his life and let the healing process begin." Then there are the Menendez brothers. Testifying for the defense, the psychologist says of Lyle: "He had this strong love for his father. And the conditions that had been produced meant he had lost his father. He no longer had this person he loved." The condition that Lyle had produced is called patricide.

Columnist Charles Krauthammer describes himself as a longtime student of the American way of confession, and he finds fascinating these instances of self-exculpation. "The themes are self-betrayal and self-forgiveness. They reflect perfectly a culture in which one no longer sins against God, natural law, the moral order, society, or even one's fellow man—to take them in descending metaphysical order—but against oneself." In the Menendez case: "Their trial has elevated therapeutic expiation to truly comic proportions. The classic definition of chutzpah is a person who murders his parents and then demands mercy from the court on the grounds that he is an orphan. . . . But this joke is dangerous. Our obsession with the psychic welfare of the victimizer leaves us philosophically defenseless against crime. When the victimizer is nothing more than another victim, justice becomes impossible. Bobbitt walks. The Menendez brothers prove impossible to convict. . . . The President and Congress can climb all over each other to be tough on crime. But as long as the only real crimes are crimes against oneself, as long as psychic injury turns criminals into victims, the task is hopeless."

Crime and punishment. It used to be thought that they go together. Having philosophically discredited the idea of punishment, we are left only with crime. But now we have crime without criminals; there are only "conditions produced," and of these conditions we are all victims. From our inability to think clearly about punishment we conclude that we are all punished, and the doleful fact is that we are. Most of us might sympathize with Lear when he cries, "I am a man more sinn'd against than sinning." But today, how would one know?

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RECONNECTING MORALITY AND RELIGION

Deference is usually paid Alasdair MacIntyre, and with good reason. With *After Virtue* and subsequent books, MacIntyre has had a singular part in changing the map of moral philosophy. British philosopher Maurice Cowling, writing in the *New Criterion*, is respectful of MacIntyre's achievement but, in surveying his work over more than three decades, thinks it evident that MacIntyre has been consistently naive in understanding the political and social circumstances in which he works. There are threads of continuity, Cowling implies, between MacIntyre's quasi-Marxism back then and his enthusiastic Thomism now. There is naivete also, he believes, in MacIntyre's hope that postmodernism will open academe to a genuine engagement between rival theories of morality. MacIntyre's inquiry, says Cowling, is about the possibility of reattaching morality and religion in the conditions of contemporary intellectual life.

Cowling's conclusion on that inquiry: "This, from MacIntyre's point of view, is an intelligible question to ask in an age in which there is an entrenched correctness about morals and religion, and even

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some Catholic universities hesitate to teach Catholic truth. But the real difficulty is that modern universities teach, if only obliquely but still as an aspect of their inconclusiveness, a form of substantive truth which is post- or anti-Christian. This consideration is fundamental. It is much later than MacIntyre supposes and, though he is traveling hopefully, it is to a destination at which he is unlikely to arrive. Certainly he understands that Liberalism is an oppressive and exclusive ideology. But equally certainly he seems not to take into account the depth of its entrenchment, the variety of the forms that it takes, and the extent to which his tactical demand for conflict involves a substantive acceptance of its inconclusiveness. Whatever their economic orientation and even when their language is *post*-Liberal, humane studies in modern universities are in the grip of a secular Liberalism which detaches morality from religion and leaves its mark on morality even where morality remains *attached* to religion. The conflict that MacIntyre wants is probably the only way forward in a difficult situation. But if his objective is the entrenchment of Thomism where Liberalism and post-Liberal correctness are entrenched at present, there is little reason to suppose that he will be successful."

One doubts, however, that such an "entrenchment" of Thomism is MacIntyre's objective. Rather, the hope is for a free and honest engagement in which one theory can demonstrate its superior ability to account for the concerns and insights of its rivals, while itself being susceptible to correction from others and from the self-correcting dynamics that it embodies. That, at least, is closer to our understanding of MacIntyre's project. Cowling is no doubt right, however, to point out the deep and virulent hostility to Christianity commonly found in the university and to raise, if only implicitly, a caution against the proposal that Christians can cooperate with sundry postmodernists in overthrowing the hegemony of modern rationalism. Some postmodernisms are frankly nihilistic, and one sups with nihilists only using a very long spoon or, better yet, does not sup with them at all.

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Why Communism Collapsed

The Soviet Union, we opined in the January issue, did not "collapse of itself"; a large measure of credit must be given to figures such as John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, and Margaret Thatcher. The Rev. Foster Freed of Knox United Church in Parksville, British Columbia, doesn't disagree, but he cautions that the way we put the matter could play into the hands of those who contend that there was nothing inherently wrong with communism. "Many on the left . . . are far from convinced that the fall of the Soviet Union proves much of anything. These folks invest a great deal of emotional energy waiting, on the one hand, for the advent of the next Nicaragua and breathlessly anticipating, on the other, the imminent collapse of Western-style democratic capitalism. They are only too happy to be told that the Soviet Union did not 'collapse of itself' but was undermined by some kind of sinister conspiracy, especially if they can associate that conspiracy with names like Thatcher, Reagan, and Wojtyla."

Mr. Freed expects there will be revisionist histories of the 1980s that will gleefully quote this writer in support of the argument that the problem was not with the Soviet system but with "external pressure orchestrated by the President of the only 'empire' they are ever likely to think of as truly evil." He makes a good point, in response to which this is an anticipatory disclaimer of any such revisionist misinterpretation. Could the Soviet system have stumbled on for another decade or two had there not been the pressures from the West? Scholars are not agreed on that, and we have no way of knowing for sure. In addition to the Western pressures there was, of course, the role of Gorbachev in launching economic changes whose political consequences he did not foresee. With respect to the internal crises of the Soviet Union, the most persuasive recent account we have read is David Remnick's *Lenin's Tomb* (Random House). The *Washington Post* correspondent in Moscow during the years of the collapse, Remnick depicts a level of mismanagement, irrational conflict, corruption, and mafioso-style gangsterism that makes the collapse seem all but inevitable.

So, it might be argued, to a significant extent the Soviet Union did "collapse of itself." At the same time, saying that leaves us with another problem. The revisionists whom Mr. Freed worries about can just as easily hijack the Remnick analysis, contending that the degenerate order he describes proves nothing about the merits of communism (or Marxist-Leninism, or socialism). The miscreants in charge whom Remnick depicts were, according to the revisionist script, traitors to the dream. For people of a certain ideological disposition, socialism is the name of their desire, and nothing can discredit that desire. Although expressing confidence in history's vindication of that desire, the desire itself escapes all of history's falsifications.

As for the collapse of communism, it happened as it happened. Hypothetically, it could have happened in a different way, or been delayed for a time. Ideological, economic, political, military, cultural,

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moral, and spiritual factors all played their part in what happened. For true believers, communism as a pure idea can never be discredited; but the real world does not allow space for pure ideas to work themselves out in a manner unaffected by everything else that is going on. In our view, Marxism-Leninism as an idea was a species of utopian madness, intellectually uninteresting in conception and necessarily brutal in application. It produced none of the benefits that it promised, and finally, it seems, was believed by almost nobody among those in charge of its implementation. It could not maintain its self-respect, it could not hold up its head, in the company of economic, cultural, and spiritual alternatives represented by figures such as John Paul, Reagan, and Thatcher. Posing as a great power is the last refuge of failed systems and, in view of the military challenge, the Soviet Union could not any longer even claim to be a great power.

The humiliation was total and abject. And dangerous, as is evident in the political demagogues in Russia now exploiting the affront to Russian imperial pride. The surprises of history are such that we may soon wish that communism had collapsed in a different way. But the fact is that it collapsed as it did, by virtue of being a very bad idea in a world that refused to conform to its wishes. Of course, for those who thought it a good idea the fault lies with the rest of the world, and with the pseudo-Marxist managers who betrayed the dream. The socialist revisionists we will have always with us, for the desire becomes more demanding as the prospect of its satisfaction recedes. The idea, like a bird, escapes all the closing traps of historical fact. There must be, they insist, an alternative to this—to the paltry, striving, bourgeois, thus and so-ness of democratic capitalism. There simply must be. And there is of course. But those who do not know the alternative of a new heaven and new earth of ultimate promise have no choice but to cling ever more desperately to socialism as the name of their desire.

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ANTICIPATORY SURRENDER

It is offensively religious, said a state of California social service bureaucrat a few years ago, for a center serving the poor to be called the Saint Vincent De Paul Center. And, in view of the center's involvement in government programs, retaining the name is probably also unconstitutional, it was suggested. The problem was not so much with the name as with the "Saint." Now if we could refer to him as Mr. Vincent De Paul there would be no difficulty. Silly? Of course, but not unrepresentative of government officials obsessed with a distorted notion of the separation of church and state; and, regrettably, not unrepresentative of church officials eager not to get on the wrong side of the state.

Here is an item from the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* in Minnesota. (One notes there is no serious movement underway to change the name of the city.) US West Direct has excised religious symbols and references from its new edition of the yellow pages. Two religiously based adult care programs, St. Benedict's Center and Good Shepherd Lutheran Home, have been told that their ads are "discriminatory." St. Benedict's had to remove its logo, which includes a cross, and could use "Benedict" in its ad only once because of its religious connotations. Good Shepherd could not use its shepherd staff logo and could print "Good Shepherd" only once. In forbidding religion-specific advertising, US West Direct invokes the federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits religious discrimination.

The two homes claim that the policy violates their religious freedom and that of their clients. Suzanne Hartley of Good Shepherd says that, if the home does not designate itself as religion-based, it could lose clients seeking that particular environment and attract others who don't want it. Ms. Hartley is undoubtedly on the side of the angels on this one, but one wonders if she understands the larger issue. The larger issue is that the dynamics of government-mandated nondiscrimination require that places such as St. Benedict's and Good Shepherd should not be religiously distinctive. To be distinctive is to run the risk of attracting people who favor the distinction in question and thereby to become complicit in "discrimination." Thus do terms such as "nondiscrimination," "pluralistic," and "inclusive" get transmogrified into government-enforced uniformity and homogeneity.

The Fair Housing Act is not supposed to apply to religious institutions such as these nursing homes. And nobody accuses the homes of actually discriminating against anyone. Their crime is that they are different and, by being different, invite applications from old people who would like to be in a Catholic or Lutheran home. Such old folk, though guilty of discrimination, probably don't know any better; but the homes, by advertising what makes them different, have no excuse and become accomplices in the offense. To be fair, the government is not saying that these homes cannot be distinctively religious in the way they present themselves to the public. US West Direct is saying that. But it is saying it out of fear of what the government regulators might do, and it is imposing its fear upon the homes. This might be called anticipatory surrender. When in doubt about what the state requires, assume the worst and cave in.

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With such deeds of spinelessness large and small the road to serfdom is paved. The "yellow" in yellow pages takes on new meaning.

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Psychiatry's Shrinking Market

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* is published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), and the new edition takes a more sympathetic tack toward religion. The manual includes a new entry titled "Religious and Spiritual Problems" which will be listed along with other problems of living that do not necessarily indicate psychiatric illness but may be "the focus of clinical attention." Changes in the manual occur from time to time, both reflecting and influencing social attitudes and legal practice. The manual also provides a common terminology to justify research and the billing of patients. In 1973, as the result of an enormous political effort by gays, homosexuality was dropped from the manual's list of personality disorders. Twenty years later religion gets equal status with homosexuality; it may be a problem for some but it is not of itself an illness.

Dr. Harold Alan Pincus of the APA's office of research said the new entry on religion is a sign of the profession's growing sensitivity not only to religion but to cultural diversity generally. Illustrating that diversity is Dr. Francis Lu, a San Francisco psychiatrist, who was involved in bringing about the change because of his personal experience. He said that in 1978 he attended a five-day seminar led by Joseph Campbell, the late mythologist, and there he had "a revelation or an epiphany that in some way my purpose in life was to bring together the East and the West." Working for this change in the manual, he explained, "is part of my living out of that epiphany."

It is possible that some religious folk may be pathetically grateful for the measure of acceptance extended by the APA. The more reasonable view is that the collapse of the plausibility of psychiatric orthodoxy, combined with the dramatic loss of market shares to low-cost small group therapies and psychopharmacologies (such as Prozac), compels the APA to desist from egregiously insulting potential customers, including religious customers. The change in the manual says less about a new appreciation of religion than about a profession that is on the ropes both economically and in terms of its credibility (the two being, of course, intimately coupled). Fitting religion in under the increasingly capacious rubric of "cultural diversity" is doing religion no favors. We may want to reciprocate by allowing that psychiatry is not necessarily a disease but it is a life problem that may require spiritual attention.

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The Catholic Moment in England, Maybe

"As I anticipated, the realization that the Catholics now form by far the largest Christian communion in England, and that many pious members of the disintegrating Anglican Church are returning to their ancient allegiance, was bound to provoke a wave of anti-Catholic bigotry." Thus Paul Johnson in the *Spectator* (London) responding to the Protestant anxieties of Ferdinand Mount that Catholics, taking advantage of the "troubles" in Anglicanism, may be getting uppity. Johnson details the ways in which Catholics are still discriminated against in English life. No Catholic, for example, can hold the office of Lord Chancellor, which we did not know. Probably not too many have been in the running, although Mr. Johnson apparently has a friend who was excluded from that post because he is Catholic. "More frequently," says Johnson, "Catholics fail to get jobs because of a nudge or a wink, a whispered aside, a confidential letter." It seems that Johnson was almost prevented from becoming editor of the *New Statesman* for that reason in 1964.

Then there is the popular culture. "Moreover, Catholics, more than members of any other faith, are daily exposed to casual and sometimes deliberate assaults in the media and showbiz, against which a Protestant state offers us no protection. I have lost count of the times when the body of Christ and the crucifix have been blasphemously and obscenely presented by depraved film directors and the like. Nuns are constantly held up to scatological ridicule, and a shameless harlot regularly paces across our stages in her role as 'Madonna.' "

Like the anchorman in *Network*, Paul Johnson is not going to take it any more. "We are not going to put up with this kind of thing any longer. The Catholic hierarchy, led by the monk-cardinal Basil Hume, is anxious to avoid a scrap and never utters a squeak of protest if left to itself. But it is high time Fr. Hume went back to his monastery and concentrated on saving his soul, thus clearing the stage for a more doughty champion. For the truth is

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the entire Christian character of our country is now threatened by its innumerable enemies, external and internal. The Anglican Church, with all its privileges and resources, has surrendered to secularism without a fight and is leaving the battlefield in fear and disarray. It is the Catholics who are taking over the struggle against the horrific paganism of the 1990s, and I can assure Mr. Mount and anyone else who is listening that we know how to fight."

Nobody is likely to get drawn and quartered this time around, but our English cousins are having a fine time replaying the wars of religion in the aftermath of Canterbury's decision to ordain women, the announcement that many Anglican priests will exercise "the Roman option," and ancillary events such as the conversion of the Duchess of Kent. One papist (as they are still charmingly called in some circles) was even reported to have said that Catholics wanted "to have their churches back." In the same issue of the *Spectator*, Piers Paul Read denies that he said any such thing. "I have always taken a perverse pride in the ugliness of most Catholic churches in England: no one would choose to worship in them unless impelled to do so by conviction." He also fears the penchant of Catholic priests to update churches in accord with current liturgical fashions. "As monuments to the cultural magnificence of our Catholic past," he concludes, "our pre-Reformation cathedrals and churches are safer in the hands of the Church of England."

Then there is Fr. Ignatius Harrison of the London Oratory who was reported to have preached that Catholics should be thinking about the "conversion" of England. He wants it known that that may be somewhat misleading. "I said it would be quite wrong for traditional Catholics (like myself) to take pleasure in the disarray and disintegration within the Church of England over women priests, not least because the same issue was also being debated within the Catholic Church." Fr. Harrison continues: "I also said that while some preferred not to speak of the conversion of England, we do seem to be living through a period of historical shift, the final resolution of the compromise enshrined in the Elizabethan Settlement and, most regrettably, the overall failure of the Oxford Movement. I suggested that the current realignment of English Christianity will take at least a generation to settle, but at the end of it the Church of England will emerge much stronger than it is now, because by then its identity will be so much clearer—an unambiguously Protestant body untrammelled by the contradictions of Anglo-Catholicism."

Without even a scintilla of Schadenfreude over the internal distress of Anglicanism, the *Tablet* (London) recently editorialized that England and Wales may be on the edge of something like what a certain American writer has called "The Catholic Moment." The editors are mildly ambivalent about that prospect, rightly noting that a Catholic ascendancy, if that is the term, must be ecumenically respectful of other communions that have a necessary part in restoring Christian influence and the foundations of public morality. This discussion takes place against the background of Prime Minister John Major's aborted program of moral restoration, called "Back to Basics" (another American import). The program has been subjected to widespread and amused contempt as a result of an unseemly number of Conservative Party leaders being discovered in compromising sexual circumstances. In view of the implosion of the Church of England and the discrediting of Conservative leadership, the *Tablet* opines that the job of spiritual and moral renewal may belong to Catholics by default.

Ironies Abounding

The Catholic-Protestant situation in England is rich in historical ironies, of course, and the English, who major in irony, can be counted on to make the most of it. Things will take some time to sort themselves out, and nobody knows how many Anglican priests will exercise the Roman option; estimates range from 250 to well over a thousand. There are also an unknown number of laity, and some entire parishes, who have come to the conclusion that the comfortable notion that the Church of England is, along with Rome and Orthodoxy, a "branch" of the Catholic Church is no longer tenable. On the Roman Catholic side, there is uneasiness about whether those who swim the Tiber at the Thames will strengthen the "traditionalist" or "progressivist" ranks in English Catholicism. An Anglican opposed to women priests is not necessarily a traditionalist on other questions. Moreover, some say that they are not opposed to women priests as such, but only to the way in which the question was unilaterally decided in disregard of, indeed in defiance of, the other two branches of the one Church.

A further complicating touch is that some Catholics think the ecclesial immigrants will strengthen the progressivist cause. Most of the priests, for instance, will be married, thus possibly relaxing the celibacy rule in the Latin Rite. It is also mentioned that, as former Anglicans, these new Catholics are formed by a tradition of free and open debate and will not buckle readily to the putatively authoritarian ways of Rome. Whether plausible or not, such things are being said. In fact, this pontificate seems to be strengthening the norm of celibacy by undergirding the discipline with a more explicit theological rationale. And Anglicans in search of authoritarianism to challenge will likely be disappointed in the Catholicism of today. Whatever the probable impact of the newcomers, Cardinal

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Hume and the bishops at first appeared quite cool to the prospect of Anglican priests entering the fold. Recently, however, John Paul II has strongly encouraged the English bishops to exhibit a more hospitable spirit, and the encouragement seems to be having its effect.

All of this makes for fascinating ecclesiastical and cultural theater, but it is more than that, and its significance extends beyond the people of England and Wales. After what will soon be five centuries, it is evident to all that the religious establishment brought into being by Henry VIII's rejection of his wife, Catherine of Aragon, was a delusion sustained only by the royal connection. Some years ago John Habgood, Archbishop of York, explained to this writer that the Church of England had never really been the church of the English people, that in fact England had never been Christianized. Subsequent events have tended to make his analysis more interesting. There was Methodism, a mighty tide of renewal that rolled from the eighteenth century into the early years of the twentieth but now seems to be exhausted. With the Anglo-Catholics either gone or effectively silenced, there would seem to be nothing now to prevent the merger with the nonconformists that has long been desired by the evangelical party, now triumphant, in the Church of England. Whether the splicing of dispirited Protestantisms will generate spiritual renewal seems doubtful. Certainly it has not had that result in this country. The evangelization of England may be up to the Catholics, or mainly up to the Catholics, after all. An Anglican friend with a bent for history says that things are working out pretty much as they might have had Ann Boleyn not caught Henry's fancy. That is stretching, but it is a suggestive stretch. As we said, the English are big on irony, and a good thing, too, for history seems to serve them more than their share.

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Islam at the Helm

Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis continues to rattle about in sundry worlds of reflection. "Islam and the End of History" is a response by Ali A. Mazrui, Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities at the State University of New York, Binghamton. Writing in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, the Albert Schweitzer professor reflects a common and poignant Muslim sense of being not so much excluded as ignored in a world history that has become inescapably Western. The message is that Islam, too, has something to contribute. And anyway, the West is not all that it is cracked up to be.

Mazrui writes: "Much of the discussion of the 'end of history' focuses on the strengths of the West and therefore assumes the weaknesses of the rest of the world. But if Islam in the twentieth century has not always been the most fertile ground for democracy, it has also been less fertile for some of the greatest evils of this century: Nazism, fascism, communism, and genocide. These have emerged in societies that were Christian or Buddhist or Confucian. Muslims are often criticized for not producing the best, but they are not congratulated for having standards of human behavior that avert the worst. There are no Muslim equivalents of Nazi concentration camps, American racial lynching, apartheid under the Dutch Reformed Church, Japanese racism before or during the Second World War, or genocide under Stalin and Pol Pot. What is it in Islam that insists on minimum standards of humanity and humanness?" In response to Mazrui's question, it would perhaps be poor form to raise questions about, inter alia, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Indonesia.

But it is always salutary for those of us in the West to be reminded of our failings. Mazrui continues: "If history as a quest for the ultimate political order is to come to an end, it can never be satisfied with the message of the West on how to maximize the best in human nature. History must consult Islam about how to check the worst in human nature. From alcoholism to racism, materialism to Nazism, drug addiction to Leninism—of all the value systems in the world—Islam has been the most resistant to the ultimate destructive forces of the twentieth century and perhaps, for the time being, including the dreaded Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). . . . It is worth asking if those societies that are closer to the Shari'ah are also more distant from being HIV positive. If so, we should take a closer look as to why that is so."

His conclusion reflects intimations of what might be called The Islamic Moment: "For much of this century, we were very often no more than passengers on a ship called the S.S. Earth. We were just passengers, sometimes passengers in chains. In the course of the second half of the twentieth century, we began to be members of the crew—at least some of us. We began to be participants in the movements of that ship and in helping to direct its ultimate destination. The question that now arises is: Are we in a position once again to take charge of the ship, if not in this decade, if not in the next decade, not long after that? Are we in a position to take our turn as the collective captain of the S.S. Earth?"

Of course nobody can know what may happen in a decade or two. The prospect of Islam "taking charge" or being the "collective captain" of world history, however, would be somewhat intimidating were it at all plausible. There is reason to expect that Islam will play a larger role in the years ahead, and stronger reason to hope that the consequence will be

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a strengthening all around of "minimum standards of humanity and humanness." In that event, the passengers, crew, and officers of S.S. Earth will have little reason to object to having more Muslims on the bridge.

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THE PRODIGAL NUN

A difficulty is that there are so many versions of the Bible around nowadays that one doesn't know what is supposed to be a translation, a paraphrase, a revisionist redaction, or the discovery of some new manuscript. A biblical scholar of our acquaintance suggests that what follows, "The Parable of the Prodigal Nun," may belong to the last category. "There was a bishop who had two daughters; and the elder of them said, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the elder gathered all together, and took her journey unto the Summer Pastoral Institute of Notre Dame University, and there wasted her substance with riotous living and liturgies. And when she had spent all, there arose a radical tide in that land, and she began to feel left out. And she went and joined herself to one of the lesbians of that country, and she sent her into the missile bases to bait swine. And she would fain have graced her Volvo with one of the bumper stickers at which the swine did scoff, but no one gave unto her. But when she came to herself she said, How many of my father's hirelings have desktop publishing capability and to spare, and I languish here with mimeos. I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, thou hast sinned against heaven and in my sight; thou art no longer worthy to be called my sire; treat me as one of thy committee chairpersons. And she arose and came to her father. But when she was yet afar off, the bishop saw her, and was moved with guilt, and ran, and tripped on his sandal, and kissed her feet. And the daughter said unto him, Father thou hast harassed me by salivating on my toenails during office hours; but do thou make me as supreme coordinator of thy chancery. And the father said to his secretaries, Bring forth quickly the Mac Plus with the laser printer and place it in her office, and put a cellular phone in the Buick, and bring the fatted cleric and sack him, and let us make caring, for this my daughter was bored and found life, and we were out of it, and yea are deemed with it again. And they began to share. Now his younger daughter was in the chapel, and as she came and drew nigh to the Activities Center, she heard music and dancing. And she paged one of the secretaries, and inquired what these things might be, and she said unto her, Thy sister is come, and the bishop hath sacked Msgr. Riordan, because thy sire she hath accepted as a partner in ministry. But she was in sore despond, and had baby clothes to pack for the Birthright drive, and did not come in. And her father came out and scolded her. But she answered and said to the bishop, Lo these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a memorandum of thine, and yet thou never gavest me a magic marker, that I might make flyers with my friends. But when this daughter came, which hath devoured thy living with the People's Committee for Reproductive Freedom in Nicaragua, thou cannest for her the seminary rector. And he said unto her, Look sweetheart, thou aren't going nowhere, even if I locked up the Ko-Rec-Type on thee, which I've got half a mind to do. But it is meet to make sharing and be glad, for CBS News is due here in fifteen minutes with a film crew. Get thee hence then into the media blackout, where there is non-inclusive wailing and gnashing of teeth. And he issued a directive that the door be bolted behind her."

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ The president of the National Education Association is, not suprisingly, an educator. Of sorts. In a paid NEA advertisement in sundry newspapers, "Violence, Greed, and Social Conscience," Keith Geiger emphasizes the importance of "learning from the legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King." Mr. Geiger writes, "I can think of no time when our nation more desperately needed to heed the legacy of Dr. King. Let us be guided by his faith in America's people and their social conscience. And let us remember his words of wisdom—the words that tell us that the highest principles of justice are found, not within law books, but within ourselves." That may be what is taught in Self-Esteem 101, but it is not what Dr. King taught about "the highest principles of justice." This, for example, from his 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail": "A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of Saint Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law." What is "within ourselves" notwithstanding.

■ The arid and dehumanizing liberalism of John Rawls comes in for some sharp words from the distinguished philosopher Stuart Hampshire of Oxford. Reviewing Rawls' *Political Liberalism* in the *New York Review of Books*, Hampshire writes,

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"At one point Rawls asserts, to me alarmingly, that 'under reasonably favorable conditions that make democracy possible, political values normally outweigh whatever nonpolitical values conflict with them.' This meta-statement surely conveys a very substantial and definite moral point of view, putting the duties owed to basic institutions that are just ones ahead of all other human commitments. This ruling brings political liberalism, supposedly not itself a comprehensive morality, into direct conflict with many comprehensive moralities that are likely to flourish in a modern democracy. It suggests that a voluntary exile or emigrant, a hermit or wanderer, a detached aesthete or artist, is a delinquent, short of full humanity, insofar as he is careless of the justice of the institutions governing his own society. This may be a defensible opinion, among the multiplicity of possible moral opinions, but abstract philosophical argument is surely not by itself sufficient to support it."

■ What a bundle of convoluted contentions are knotted by the phrase "inclusive language." Alvin F. Kimel, an Episcopal priest, has conscientiously and discerningly sorted through the bundle in "The Holy Trinity Meets Ashtoreth: A Critique of 'Inclusive' Liturgies." Originally published in the *Anglican Theological Review*, reprints of this fine essay are available by writing First Things, 156 Fifth Ave, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. ($1.50 for one copy, $1 each for two or more.)

■ We are regularly implored to find publishers for books, and to read manuscripts with an eye toward making them publishable. We can seldom be of help on either score. Publishers are a lamentable lot, as are writers. Of publishers and editors, Voltaire had this to say: "I could show you all society poisoned by this class of person—a class unknown to the ancients—who, not being able to find any honest occupation, be it manual labor or service, and unluckily knowing how to read and write, become the brokers of literature, live on our works, steal our manuscripts, falsify them, and sell them." That may be a bit much. Jacques Barzun is somewhat more temperate: "In spite of good will, and frequently of true friendship, Author and Publisher are natural antagonists. Authors, as everybody knows, are difficult—they are unreliable, arrogant, and grasping. But publishers are impossible—grasping, arrogant, and unreliable. . . . Many publishing tangles come from the fact that authors and publishers are far too much alike."

■ "The therapeutic society," which is the title of his best known book, is the phrase most readily associated with the name of Philip Rieff. Now there is a new book forthcoming, we know not when, from the University of Chicago Press, *Sacred Order/ Social Order: Image Entries to the Aesthetics of Authority*. An extended excerpt, the size of a small book, appeared in the *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*. It is, as one would expect from Rieff, brilliantly eccentric. It is also not a little apocalyptic, as our historical circumstance amply warrants. The overarching theme is that there was a first world of Athens and Jerusalem from which we came, a second world of which Rieff and other civilized people are defenders, but which is now probably coming to an end at the hands of a third world of cultural deconstruction and nihilism. The book is about, in short, the much discussed Kulturkampf. Here is a brief sample: "*The horror of the unremembered life.* The horror is not alone of identity ended; rather, of identity unremembered. In second worlds, there is Kaddish, there are Masses for the dead. Cultures are constituted by the union of the living and the dead in rituals of living memory. Never before, in our late second world, has the authority of the past been sacrificed with a more conscious effort of forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is now the curricular form of our higher education. This form guarantees that we, of the transition from second to third worlds, will become the first barbarians. Barbarism is not an expression of simple technologies or of mysterious taboos; at least there were taboos and, moreover, in all first worlds, the immense authority of the past. By contrast, the coming barbarism, much of it here and now, not least to be found among our most cultivated classes, is our ruthless forgetting of the authority of the past. Sacred history, which never repeats itself, is thus profaned in an unprecedented way by transgression so deep that it is unacknowledged. The transgression of forgetfulness makes the cruelty of abortion absolutely sacrilegious; more precisely, antireligious. According to the unspoken doxology of our *abolitionist/abortionist* movements, identities are to be flushed away far down the memory hole as our flush-away technologies of repression permit. Third world activists are absent minded in the repressive mode and yet deliberately expressive in the cleverities of their deceit round the phrase 'pro-choice.' The freedom to commit, as masterless men and women, transgressive acts was never denied by our second world guiding elites. By their fictions of unfreedom, third world elites engage themselves to a deodorized death cultus, protected by unauthorized self-inventions which constitute a doxa of rights proclaiming the endless supersession of identities by roles. Roles are functions of multiple social selves that pretend to no sacred self, unitary and itself alone with its invisible god-relation there to be read by the mind's eye through every shift and shuffle of life."

■ This news clipping says that Woody Allen is in Venice, back together with Soon-Yi Previn, daughter of his former lover, Mia Farrow. Allen says he plunged himself into work to get through the tribulations of his messy court battles with Farrow. "I'm somewhat of a Calvinist, but that's how I saved

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myself, and if in the end you have produced something good, the rest recedes into the background," he said. Mr. Allen's theological understanding seems to be on a par with his personal morality. Odd, however, how many otherwise literate people equate Calvinism with an obsessive devotion to work. The cultural ghost of Max Weber, no doubt.

■ At the end of January, while the Northeast U.S. was locked in by record-breaking cold, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa. The committee urged upon us "true repentance and changed lifestyles to bring about a radical change to halt global warming." Alarums about global warming have scant support in the scientific world, but it was the middle of summer in South Africa, and the WCC is always ready to employ any excuse for calling to repentance those parts of the world that are guilty of capitalist productivity.

■ Pilgrim Press, a liberal Protestant publisher, has issued *Life/Choice: The Theory of Just Abortion* by Lloyd Steffen of Lehigh University. The publisher says that the book "proposes a 'moderate' position that attempts to incorporate concerns of those on both sides of this divisive issue. [The author] asks pro-life and pro-choice advocates to see that abortion is a moral dilemma—not simply a political or public policy issue—a moral dilemma that furthermore demands deep moral reflection. The author boldly claims that 'some abortions are morally permissible and others are not.'" One may be tempted to smile at such a "bold" assertion of such a "moderate" position, and those on the pro-life side hardly need to be told that abortion is a moral, and not just a political or public policy, issue. There is something noteworthy, however, in Steffen's effort to apply "just war" criteria to the justification of abortion. As in just war theory, the presumption is against killing. Steffen's argument challenges pro-choicers who adamantly deny that there is any moral question to be raised about the taking of unborn life, and against those who go farther by asserting that abortion is an unqualified moral good. Of course his argument is a long way from the goal of the pro-life movement, that every unborn child be protected in law and welcomed in life. But it puts the burden of proof on those who would kill the child, and at least opens up a conversation that could lead to the kind of accommodation that most Americans want, and that could be a significant movement toward the pro-life goal. That *Life/Choice* appears now from Pilgrim Press, at a time when many liberal Protestants have declared the abortion debate to be definitively closed in favor of an unlimited abortion license, is, just maybe, a hopeful straw in the wind.

■ Collegians Activated to Liberate Life (CALL) was mentioned here a couple of issues ago and we're asked how folk can get in touch. The operational center is 1605 Monroe Street, Suite 107, Madison, Wisconsin 53711. Phone (608) 256-CALL, fax (608) 256-8999. They're a terrific bunch of young people operating on and near campuses around the country with a fine balance of protest, education, maternity care, and religiously inspired determination. They put out a newsletter and, yes, they need financial support.

■ This from a press release: "Marquette's Jesuit, Catholic heritage emphasizes care and respect for all people." It appears from the phrasing that that great institution of higher learning wants to have it both ways, Jesuit and Catholic. The release has to do with the work of a committee of students, alumni, and administrators who have decided to change the nickname, logo, and mascot used by the university's sports teams. They are currently called "warriors," and it was determined that the name and the Indian logo are "not in harmony with our long-standing respect for Native American tradition." That respect, one infers, goes back long, long before they were called Native Americans. The press release concludes, "It is also important to note that this was not done in response to any outside pressure. Actually, there was no such pressure." Exactly. It seems nobody was bothered by the old name except the members of the committee. Being politically correct is wanting to say you're sorry. Even if, as in this case, unenlightened Indians are not sensitive enough to be offended, or even to accommodate you by claiming to be offended.

■ The New Age Dominican priest Matthew Fox, who was ordered by the Vatican to take a year off "for reflection" and was subsequently expelled by his order, has been received into the Episcopal Church by Bishop William Swig of San Francisco. The Dominicans had ordered Fox to return to Chicago but he said that was "against my conscience." Leaving aside his bargain basement New Age heresies about the goddess, the divinity of nature, and so forth, Fox's conscientious objection to Chicago is sufficient cause for severe church censure in the opinion of those of us who have a soft spot for that second but never secondary city.

■ Oklahoma's Court of Criminal Appeals has ruled that a fetus that is viable at the time of a fatal injury is a human being. The ruling came in connection with a drunken driver who caused the death of a fetus four days before it was expected to be born. Oklahoma thus joins Massachusetts and South Carolina in rejecting the "born alive" criterion of common law. The judges said that medical advances made the "born alive" principle obsolete. Oh yes, the finding that a viable fetus is a human being does not apply in the case of a legal abortion. You figure it.

■ The reason national church budgets are shrinking, says Lyle Schaller, an authority on such matters, is

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that the churches have been too successful in teaching responsible stewardship. People know that they are responsible for seeing that funds are used effectively, and they trust themselves more than national leaders in making such decisions. Whether national offices should take credit for teaching stewardship or inculcating distrust is, one might suppose, more than a terminological dispute. Schaller was addressing a missions group of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

■ Two executives of big New York advertising firms, James Patterson and Peter Kim, have this article in *The Responsive Community*, the journal of what is called the communitarian movement. The article presents itself as "an alarmed perspective" on America's moral condition. There is undoubtedly much to be alarmed about, but this curious Madison Avenue broadside tosses statistics and generalizations about with remarkable abandon, and without reference to the slightest documentation. One of the more egregious examples: "Religion has little impact on the moral life of the majority of Americans." Really? That is a generalization without support in the voluminous research on such questions. The article is, in sum, a disservice to what should be a serious discussion, and one is puzzled by its appearance in a journal that is devoted to a greater appreciation of community, including moral community.

■ One of the more poignant figures in the sad post-colonial history of Africa is Kenneth Kaunda, now in bitter retirement after twenty-seven years as president of Zambia. Kaunda, the devout son of a Presbyterian minister, was for a long time lionized in international Christian circles as a shining symbol of the New Africa. A strong pacifist and socialist, in the 1970s Kaunda changed his mind about the necessity of force in effective governance and, much too late, began to have second thoughts about a command economy that bogged the country down with bureaucracy, corruption, huge subsidies, and unpayable international debts. On the future of sub-Saharan Africa, Kaunda is not upbeat: "The solution is very far from being found. I wish we could say we will pull out of it. I fear we will have more bloodshed. Thirty years is a short period in an African nation. You need leaders to be born who do not have their umbilical cord in colonialism." To think of Africa today is to weep. From Sudan to Zaire to Zambia, it is almost unremitting catastrophe. The ominous fact is that, aside from South Africa, the continent has for all practical

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purposes—political, economic, cultural—disappeared from the map of the world. The mandarins of world affairs have little reason to think about it. Some missionaries, some relief workers, and, above all, the voice of John Paul II keep calling on the world not to forget Africa. The cry has slight resonance in the world arena. Ironically, it is the much-despised South Africa that now represents the main African hope for stable democracy and economic prosperity. Perhaps the success of multi-racial democracy and a market economy there could revive a sense of hope for the entire region. One must pray for that. Meanwhile, figures of shattered hope such as Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (Jimmy Carter called the latter "the conscience of Africa") invite critical reflection on the ideological delusions that for so long held in thrall millions of Africans and their friends in the West, not least of all in the churches of the West.

■ There is, if you will believe it, a new "faith-friendly TV frontier." According to the conservative Media Research Center, religion-bashing on television is slowly giving way to programming more sympathetic to the religiously committed. Programs mentioned favorably are "Against The Grain," "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman," "L.A. Law," and "Christy." Says Dave Johnson, producer of "Against the Grain": "Religion is important in our lives. There is a trend in the whole country [to get] back to family values. The people in Hollywood are starting to catch up with the rest of the country. The average American voice is finally being heard." We'll see. Well, not we personally, for we personally tend to agree with John Paul II's recent observation that the best way to deal with television is not to.

■ Here's an advertisement for five audio tapes in which Father George Rutler reads *Veritatis Splendor* and offers an "easy to follow commentary." Read on: "You can master the moral principles in the Pope's latest encyclical *effortlessly* while listening to just five audio tape cassettes in the privacy of your own home or car." Master? Effortlessly? Fr. Rutler is a formidable teacher, but really.

■ Now available: an updated index of FIRST THINGS, covering issues from March 1990 through March 1994. It includes article listings by topic and author, plus a separate listing of book reviews. Send check for $8.50 to FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010.

■ Forty years is a good run for any serious magazine, and that's the milestone reached by *Dissent*, a civilized voice in favor of what its editors insist is *democratic* socialism. Offering their congratulations on the anniversary, the editors of *The New Republic* write: "*Dissent*, then, was no church with a settled doctrine. It believed in and practiced the art of argument. . . . Its tool was the scalpel and not the bludgeon. The scalpel was best put to work in the analysis of American society, its cultural boorishness, economic inequities, rhetorical oversimplifications, political rigor mortis." That, presumably, is *TNR*'s analytical scalpel at work with excruciating delicacy. One shudders to think of what they would do with a bludgeon. As for *Dissent* and settled doctrine, any magazine still pushing socialism in 1994 clearly has a doctrine much more settled than that of most churches of our acquaintance.

Sources: Data on sex and marriage in "What's Marriage Got To Do With It?" by William Mattox; and on homosexuality, "Sexual Disorientation: Research in the Homosexual Debate" by Robert Knight—both available from Family Research Council, 700 Thirteenth Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20005. Charles Krauthammer on confession, *Washington Post*, February 9, 1994. Maurice Cowling on Alasdair MacIntyre, *New Criterion*, February 1994. On elimination of religious symbols, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, February 11, 1994 (with thanks to Mary Sherry of Burnsville, Minnesota). On contemporary psychiatry, *New York Times*, February 10, 1994. Paul Johnson on Catholics in England, *Spectator*, February 5, 1994. On Islam and the "end of history," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Winter 1993.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: NEA advertisement appeared in *Washington Times*, January 16, 1994 (thanks to W. Bradford Wilcox of Washington, D.C.). Stuart Hampshire on John Rawls, *New York Review of Books*, August 12, 1993. Quotations on publications and authors from Ed M. van der Maas, *Inside Relgious Publishing* (Zondervan). Excerpt from Philip Rieff's *Sacred Order/Social Order* in *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, Vol 3, No. 315 (1991). Woody Allen quoted in *Louisville Courier-Journal*, January 3, 1994. WCC on global warming, Ecumenical Press Service, February 1, 1994. Marquette notice in *American Spectator*, February 1994. On Fr. Matthew Fox, *Wanderer*, February 10, 1994. On Oklahoma fetus ruling, *National & International Religion Report*, February 7, 1994. Lyle Schaller on national church budgets in *National & International Religion Report*, February 7, 1994. Patterson and Kim on morality in America, *Responsive Community*, Winter 1993-94. On Kenneth Kaunda and Africa, *New York Times*, February 10, 1994. On faith-friendly television programming, *TV etc.*, January 1994. On *Dissent* magazine, *New Republic*, February 14, 1994.

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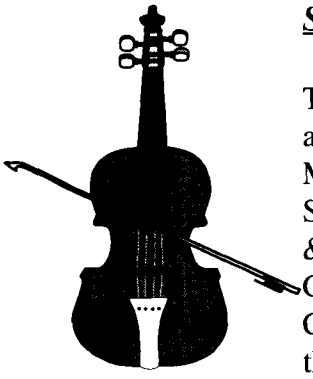

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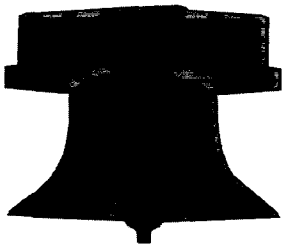

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